



A Free Course on the History of Western Art

Dr Laurence Shafe www.shafe.uk

This presentation uses AI tools including Anthropic's Claude, ElevenLabs, and HeyGen. The art-historical content and editorial judgement remain my own.

- Welcome. I have finished the History of Western Art but I had some lectures that I gave many years ago and I thought I could use AI systems to convert them to my new design, improve the text and use a clone of my voice to give them.

GENERAL REFERENCES AND COPYRIGHT

- My talks and notes are produced with the assistance of AI systems such as Claude, Perplexity, ChatGPT, Google Gemini and Microsoft CoPilot.
- They are also based on information found on public websites such as Wikipedia, Tate, National Gallery, Louvre, The Met, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Khan Academy and the Art Story.
- If they use information from specific books, websites or articles these are referenced at the beginning of each talk and in the 'References' section of the relevant page. The talks that are inspired by an exhibition may use the booklets and books associated with the exhibition as a source of information.
- Where possible images and information are taken from Wikipedia under an [Attribution-Share Alike Creative Commons License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/).
- If I have forgotten to reference your work then please let me know and I will add a reference or delete the information.



20-02 ANGELICA KAUFMANN

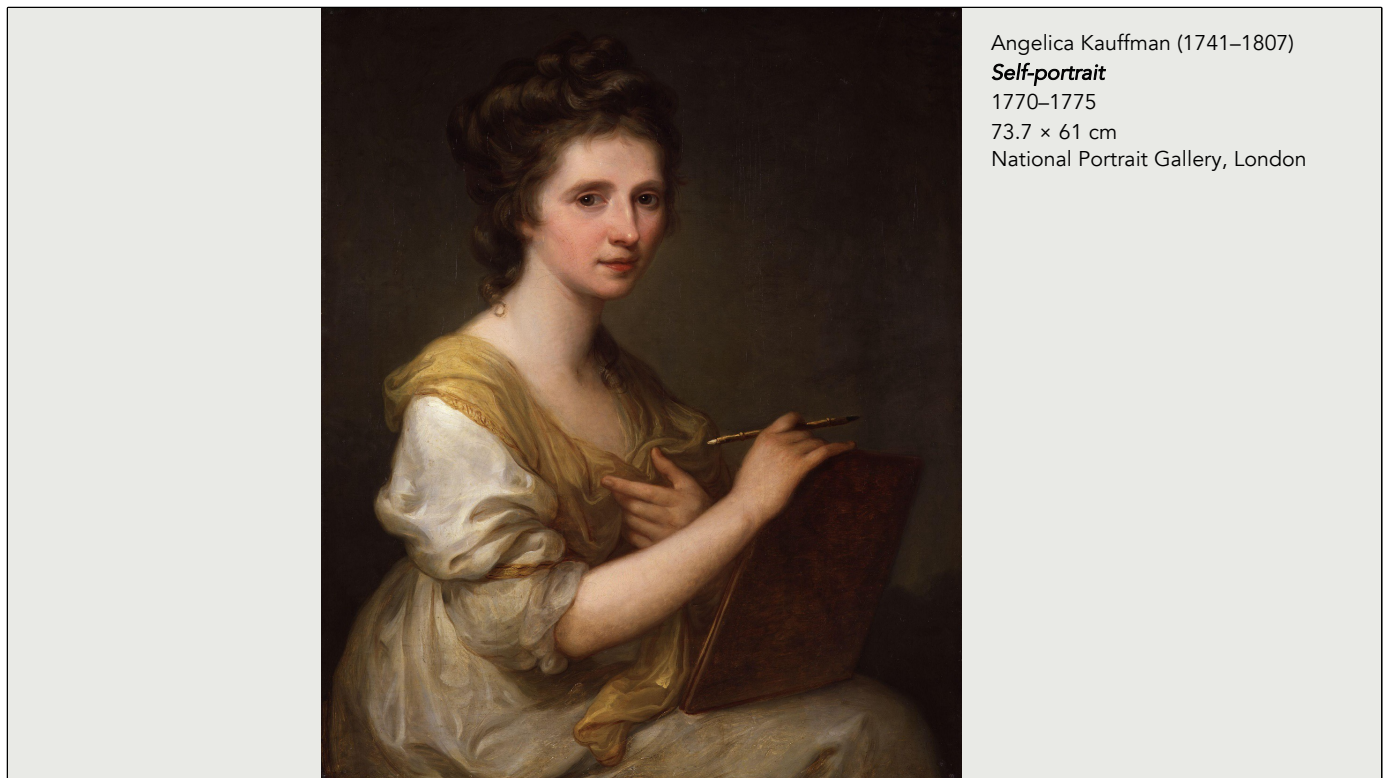
DR. LAURENCE SHAFE

WWW.SHAFE.UK



Angelica
Kauffman
(1741–1807)
Self-portrait
1770–1775

Angelica Kauffman was born in Chur in 1741, elected to Italian academies before she was twenty, and went on to become one of only two women among the founding members of the Royal Academy in 1768. This talk traces her entire career — her prodigious training, her London triumph, her reinvention of history painting, her commercial genius, and her final Roman years — placing her squarely at the centre of eighteenth-century European art.



Angelica Kauffman (1741–1807)
Self-portrait
1770–1775
73.7 × 61 cm
National Portrait Gallery, London

Angelica Kauffman (1741–1807), Self-portrait, 1770–1775, 73.7 × 61 cm,
National Portrait Gallery, London

Having traced Kauffmann's early training and her triumphant reception by the Italian academies, we turn now to the London years that made her a household name. This **self-portrait from the early 1770s** shows Kauffmann at around thirty, already at the height of her London fame. She presents herself with cool assurance: the loosely draped clothing signals the elevated tradition of portraiture, while the brush and sketchbook in her hands declare her professional identity without apology. By this point, one engraver described all of London as "**Angelicamad**" — a fever of admiration that no one wished to be cured of. The acclaim was earned. During her **fifteen years in London**, she produced roughly **800 oil paintings** alongside numerous drawings, spanning history painting and portraiture, including a remarkable sequence of self-portraits. **Sir Joshua Reynolds** became her firmest ally, calling her "Miss Angel," and she moved easily through court circles, receiving commissions from Queen Charlotte and the royal family. She earned approximately **£14,000** across those years — at a time when a gentleman could live comfortably on five hundred a year. Wendy Wassyng Roworth has shown how

Kauffmann's command of Italian, French, German, and English gave her access to patronage networks that most British artists could never reach.

Notes

This is Angelica Kauffman, a self-portrait from the early 1770s when she was about 30. She had arrived in London a few years before and by the 1770s a fever swept through London like an epidemic. Nearly everyone was effected but no one wanted to be cured. The sufferers were called 'Angelicamad' and the cause was the wonder caused by this continental artist. She became one of the most successful women artists in history.

She looks cool, calm and confident and is wearing the conventional loosely draped clothing that was expected in a portrait of this period and she holds the tools of her trade, a brush and a sketchbook. She was a prolific painter and produced about 800 oil paintings and numerous drawings. These were mostly history paintings and portraits which included a large number of self-portraits. These are now in the many countries that celebrated her genius.

During the 15 years she spent in London she earned about £14,000, a vast fortune, a gentleman it was said could live well on £500 a year.

In order to place her achievements within the context of the period I will cover a number of themes ...

Introduction

Angelica Kaufman (1741-1807) was born in Chur in Graubünden, Switzerland. Her father Johann Joseph Kauffmann was relatively poor but a skilled painter who trained his precocious daughter who was a child prodigy. She acquired several languages from her mother Cleophea Lutz, read avidly and was a talented musician. By the age of 12 she was painting bishops and nobles. She painted this self-portrait when she was about 30 and shortly after the Royal Academy had been founded.

Before coming to Britain she was a very popular portrait painter in Rome as she spoke Italian, English, French and German. One person wrote, 'She may be styled beautiful and in singing may vie with our best virtuosi.'

She was persuaded to come to London and the rank of Lady Wentworth opened society to her, and she was well received everywhere, the royal family especially showing her great favour. Her firmest friend, however, was Sir

Joshua Reynolds who called her 'Miss Angelica' or 'Miss Angel'.

She was extremely productive and everything she produced was grabbed immediately. One engraver did nothing else but produce engravings of the latest Kauffman work. He described the whole world as 'Angelicamad'.

Chronology

Based on Baumgärtel, Bettina: Angelica Kauffman – Chronology, in: Angelika Kauffmann Research Project – online, <https://www.angelika-kauffmann.de/en/chronology/> [accessed 11/11/2021]

30/10/1741 born in Chur, Switzerland to Johann Joseph Kauffmann and Cleophea Lutz

1742 family moves to Morbegno

1745 aged 4, she shows artistic talent, father gives her drawing lessons

1750, aged 9, draws her first portrait

1752 her half-brother by her father's first marriage comes to live with the family, the family move to Como in Lombardy, Austria

1753 aged 12, Self-portrait as a Singer with Sheet Music

1754-57 first trip to Italy, in Milan she paints a Duchess, Archbishop and a diplomat, copies Old Masters

1757 her mother dies and she decides to pursue painting not singing

1758-60 she receives many portrait commissions

1758-62 second trip to Italy - Milan, Parma, Modena, Bologna

1762 honorary member Academy of Bologna, visits Florence, copies Old Masters, elected member Florence's Academy, meets British visitors on the Grand tour. Many portraits, meets Benjamin West, first etchings such as Susanna and the Elders

1763-64 first visit to Rome inspires her first large-scale history painting Bacchus and Ariadne, makes illicit studies of male nudes. Travels to Naples, copies Old Masters in Gallery di Capodimonte, portraits of English and Scottish visitors including Portrait of David Garrick. Returns to Rome Portrait of Johann Joachim Winckelmann secures her professional breakthrough. Courted by English artist Nathaniel Dance.

1765, aged 24, elected member of Accademia di San Luca, paints Hope - La

Peranza as reception piece. Portrait of David Garrick exhibited at Free Society of Artists makes her well known even before she arrives in London. In July she travels to Venice and then to London with Lady Bridget Wentworth Murray wife of the British ambassador. Stops in Paris and admire Rubens.

1766 opens a large studio in London first in Suffolk Street, Charing Cross, then Golden Square, Soho. Visits Joshua Reynolds in his studio, and each paints the other's portrait. Her good network of female patrons leads to a commission from the Queen Mother for a portrait of her daughter Augusta Friederike Luise with Prince Charles George Augustus (Royal Collection) and from the Queen Charlotte for her Portrait with Prince George IV as the Genius of the Arts (Royal Collection)

1767, aged 26, her father comes to London. In November she secretly weds 'Count' Frederick de Horn an impostor in February 1768 the marriage is declared invalid.

1768 Exhibits at the Free Society of Artists, paints three innovative history paintings including Penelope Taking Down the Bow of Ulysses (Saltram House). In December named a founding member of the Royal Academy with Mary Moser, the only female Academicians for the next 200 years.

1769 shows ground-breaking history paintings at the opening exhibition at the Royal Academy: Hector Taking Leave of Andromache; Venus Showing Aeneas and Achates the Way to Carthage and Achilles Discovered by Ulysses amongst the Daughters of Lycomedes. At the instigation of Lady Theresa Parker, the whole series is acquired for Saltram House.

1770 history paintings of scenes from ancient and medieval British history Vortigern, King of Britain, Enamoured with Rowena at the Battle of Hengist, the Saxon General (Saltram House), Eleanora Sucking the Venom out of the Wound of her Husband, King Edward I. Her love of literature inspires her to create Inibaca Discovering Herself to Trenmor from James Macpherson's Ossian, and Poor Maria, one of her most widely known motifs, from Laurence Sterne's A Sentimental Journey. Starts working with William Wynne Ryland and numerous other engravers.

1771, six-month trip to Ireland where she paints the Irish gentry.

1772 produces etchings with her future brother-in-law Giuseppe Carlo Zucchi.

1773 selected to decorate St Pauls cathedral, with Reynolds, Dance, Barry and Cipriani.

1775 she objects to The Conjuror by Nathaniel Hone.

1776 her oil paintings are reproduced as 'mechanical paintings'.

1777 Portrait of Henrietta Laura Pulteney, c. 1777, The Holburne Museum, Great Pulteney St, Bath. Children in 17th century were treated as young adults. This changed in the 18th century partly thanks to books written by John Locke in 1698 and Rousseau in 1766.

1778 the price of her paintings rises.

1780 she completes four ceiling paintings Invention, Composition, Design and Colouring, for Somerset House, home of the Royal Academy. Ryland exhibits 1456 engravings after her paintings and her fame in England reaches a peak and she leaves.

1781 Leaves London after 15 years. Agrees marriage contract (prenup) and marriage to Antonio Zucchi. Leaves London for Flanders, Innsbruck, Verona and Padua. In October she is introduced to Tsar Paul I of Russia and his wife (Leonardo da Vinci Dying in the Arms of Francis I, 1782) and works for leading noble families.

1781-96 her husband publishes a catalogue of her work, Memorandum of Painting, which she continues to maintain after his death.

1782 her father dies and her paternal aunt. She is made an honorary member of the Venice Academy. Moves with her husband to a palazzo in Rome formerly occupied by Mengs and opens one of the city's most prestigious studios. In the summer and again in the summer of 1784 she visits the Queen of Naples and paints The Royal Family of Ferdinand IV and Maria Carolina of Naples and their Children.

1784 receives a commission for two history paintings from Emperor Joseph II of Austria Hermann Crowned by Thushelda; Aeneas Mourns Pallas, the Son of Evander, Killed by Turnus,

1785 she gives the princess of Naples drawing lessons but declines becoming court artist. Multi-figure history paintings Servius Tullius and Achilles Discovered by Ulysses amongst the Daughters of Lycomedes (1789) for Catherine the Great; Cornelia, Mother of the Gracchi [Reception] and Julia, Wife Of Pompey, Fainting (Weimar, Kunstsammlungen zu Weimar) for Maria Carolina; Pliny the Younger and his Mother at the Eruption of Vesuvius and Virgil on his Deathbed for George Bowles.

1785 buys a villa near the papal residence to spend the summers with friends. Supports and encourages young artists who copy her work. The first in depth biography is published.

1786-88 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe comes to Rome. Kauffman becomes a close friend and paints his portrait. Her lively salon is attended by many famous guests.

1788 Duchess of Weimar visits her in Rome with many famous artists from her circle including Johann Friedrich Herder whose portrait she paints the following year.

1789 Her Self-Portrait for the Duke of Tuscany is hung next to that of Michelangelo. Receives commissions for Shakespeare Gallery and Bergamo's Chapel Colleoni.

1791 receives her first and only commission from Pope Pius VI to paint an altarpiece. She also completes her major Self-portrait at the Crossroads between the Arts of Music and Painting, the portrait of 'Attitudes' artist Emma Hamilton, Lady Hamilton as Comic Muse, and the large portrait of Princess Catherine Petrovna Baryatinskaya, née Princess of Holstein-Beck, with her family.

1792 she meets Elisabeth Vigée Le Brun in exile during the French Revolution. Kauffman's salon is considered a "temple of female fame".

1795 26 December her husband dies and her cousin comes to provide support.

1798 French troops occupy Rome. Her studio avoids looting but her finances suffer from devaluation.

c. 1801 her last Self-Portrait.

1802 health trip to Lake Como stopping in many cities. She gives Coronation of the Virgin as an altarpiece to a church.

1803 meets and befriends Ida Brun. Draws up a new will, burns letters and promissory notes and makes provision for a foundation for the poor.

1805 last visit and commission from Crown prince Ludwig I Bavaria.

1806 summer trip to Albano for her rheumatism. Completes her last religious history painting Birth of St John the Baptist.

5/11/1807 she dies after a short illness. A magnificent funeral with her major paintings carried behind the coffin and a huge crowd attends.

1809 her portrait bust is installed next to Raphael in the Pantheon, Rome.

Biographies published in 1810-11, 1892-93, 1924.

1982 Catalogue Raisonné started.

1990 Angelica Jauffmann Research Project founded.

Exhibitions in 1941, 1968, 1972, 1985 (permanent), 1987 (museum), 1992, 1994 (festival), 1998-9 (retrospective), 2007 (museum), 2010 (museum), 2019, 2020 (Düsseldorf).

Important Works by Kaufmann

1753 aged 12, Self-portrait as a Singer with Sheet Music

1763-64 Bacchus and Ariadne

1764 Portrait of David Garrick

1764 Portrait of Johann Joachim Winckelmann

1765, aged 24, Hope - La Peranza

1766 Augusta Friederike Luise with Prince Charles George Augustus (Royal Collection)

1766 Portrait with Prince George IV as the Genius of the Arts (Royal Collection)

1768 Penelope Taking Down the Bow of Ulysses (Saltram House)

1769 Hector Taking Leave of Andromache

1769 Venus Showing Aeneas and Achates the Way to Carthage

1769 Achilles Discovered by Ulysses amongst the Daughters of Lycomedes

1770 Vortigern, King of Britain, Enamoured with Rowena at the Battle of Hengist, the Saxon General (Saltram House),

1770 Eleanora Sucking the Venom out of the Wound of her Husband, King Edward I

1770 Inibaca Discovering Herself to Trenmor from James Macpherson's Ossian

1770 Poor Maria

1777 Portrait of Henrietta Laura Pulteney, c. 1777, The Holburne Museum, Great Pulteney St, Bath.

1780 Invention, Composition, Design and Colouring, Somerset House

1782 Leonardo da Vinci Dying in the Arms of Francis I

1782 The Royal Family of Ferdinand IV and Maria Carolina of Naples and their Children.

1784 Hermann Crowned by Thusnelda

1784 Aeneas Mourns Pallas, the Son of Evander, Killed by Turnus,

1789 Servius Tullius and Achilles Discovered by Ulysses amongst the Daughters of Lycomedes

1789 Cornelia, Mother of the Gracchi [Reception] and Julia, Wife Of Pompey, Fainting (Weimar, Kunstsammlungen zu Weimar)

1789 Pliny the Younger and his Mother at the Eruption of Vesuvius

1789 Virgil on his Deathbed

1786-88 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

1789 Johann Friedrich Herder

1789 Self-Portrait next to that of Michelangelo

1791 Self-portrait at the Crossroads between the Arts of Music and Painting

1791 Lady Hamilton as Comic Muse

1791 Portrait of Princess Catherine Petrovna Baryatinskay

1800-1 her last Self-Portrait.

1802 Coronation of the Virgin

1806 her last religious history painting Birth of St John the Baptist.

Works Mentioned in the Book 'Miss Angel'

1773 Telemachus at the Court of Sparta

Queen Eleanor on the Point of Death

Death of Alcestis

1764 Bacchus Discovering Ariadne, Deserted by theus, on Naxos (first subject picture, influence of Batoni?)

1764 Portrait of John Byng of Wrotham Park, Kent (painted in Naples)

1765 Chryseis Returning to Her Father Chryses

1765 Coriolanus Begged by His Mother Veturia and His Wife Volumnia to Renounce War against His People.

Penelope at the Loom

1765 Portrait of a Gentleman (Mr Garrick)

1766 Portrait of Anne Conway Damer (her only painting that year although Portrait of Lady [Hester] Stanhope might be 1766)

1770 Vortigern and Rowena (or 1772?)

1771 Elfrida and Edgar

1768 Hector and Andromache,

1768 Penelope Taking Down the Bow of Ulysses
 1768 Venus Showing Aeneas and Achates the Way to Troy
 1769 Achilles Discovered by Ulysses amongst the Attendants of Deidamia.
 1772 Andromache and Hecuba Weeping Over the Ashes of Hector
 1772 Achilles Discovered by Ulysses
 1770 Cleopatra Adorning the Grave of Mark Anthony
 1770 Hector Accusing Paris of Effeminacy,
 Venus Showing Aeneas and Achates
 1776? Poor Maria
 1773 Trenmore and Imbaca
 1767 Lady Elizabeth Berkeley as Hebe
 1770 Selina Fitzherbert as Hebe,
 1773 Morning Amusement or The Embroideress (very popular)
 1773 Telemachus at the Court of Sparta
 1782 Miranda and Ferdinand
 1782-83 Alexander Ceding to Appelles His Beloved Campaspe
 1784 Hermann and Thusnelda
 1784 Palls Killed by Turnus
 1787 Portrait of Mmme de Krüdener
 1788-89 Two Gentlemen of Verona (the moment when Valentine, Proteus,
 Sylvia and Julia meet in the wood)
 1792 Self-Portrait Hesitating between Painting and Music
 Dr. Samuel Tissot (doctor to kings, painted in naples)
 Emma Hamilton
 Cornelia Knight (woman intellectual)
 1787? Portrait of Goethe
 Orpheus Leading Eurydice out of Hades
 1797 Portrait of a Lady of Quality (last exhibit at the RA)
 1799 Religion (haunted by poverty)
 1800? David and Nathan
 1800? Jesus and the Samaritan Woman
 5 November 807 she died of consumption

Notes

She avoided avoided personal publicity, complained about biographies and burnt nearly all her papers before she died.

When she married Zucchi they signed a pre-nup.

"In Britain, association with the court brought no such dangers. For Angelica Kauffman, her arrival in London in 1766 – four years after George III came to the throne and within two years of the founding of the Royal Academy - was perfectly timed. That she was born in Switzerland, spoke fluent German and was, indeed, considered German (since 'in eighteenth-century terms the word "deutsch" referred as much to language as to geography and culture'), were positive advantages to an artist seeking royal patrons among members of the House of Hanover.

The King's sister, Augusta, Duchess of Brunswick, was the first of the family to have her portrait painted by Kauffman. It received high praise in the newspapers, verses were written in its honour, and the visit by the Princess of Wales to Kauffman's studio to see the picture was later followed by an introduction to Queen Charlotte. The Queen had already proved herself a keen patroness of female artists by supporting Mary Moser and Catherine Read, and also by lobbying for the admission of Kauffman and Moser as founding members of the Royal Academy. Kauffman's portrait of the Queen, Her Majesty Queen Charlotte Raising the Genius of the Fine Arts, painted in 1772, pays tribute to this patronage. Kauffman's ability to attract female patrons continued when she left England to live in Italy.

In 1783 in Naples, she was pounced upon by Maria Carolina, Queen of the Two Sicilies, a fearsome woman who already owned a large collection of Kauffman's prints and tried vainly to persuade her to accept the position of court painter. The group portrait Kauffman painted of the Queen, her husband, Ferdinand IV, and six of their seventeen children (no fewer than eight died in their infancy of smallpox) is ludicrously flattering, and tells viewers all they need to know about being a successful portraitist. The King, who in reality was short and scrawny, with a huge bulbous nose, pig's eyes and a 'forest of coffee-coloured hair, which he never powders', is portrayed by Kauffman as tall and ineffably elegant, while his dumpy wife is the epitome of relaxed grace. The three dogs in the picture are probably the only figures to be faithfully represented. But the price she was paid for this travesty was gratifyingly large.

Kauffman also painted a 'monumental and many-figured' history painting for Catherine the Great, who already owned a number of her works and whose exalted patronage ensured that other Russian clients commissioned her, including her son Paul. Catherine made no bones about her preference for the work and character of Kauffman over that of her principal rival, Vigée Le Brun, declaring that Kauffman 'unites elegance with nobility in all her figures' and that they all 'possess ideal beauty'. Vigée Le Brun, she complained, had made her granddaughters look like 'two pugs basking in the sun'.

Kauffman and Vigée Le Brun achieved celebrity status in their lifetimes, and it was their ability to attract patronage that played a great part in their success. Vigée Le Brun's title of 'Painter to Marie Antoinette', though lethal in France following the Revolution, preceded her arrival in cities throughout Europe and Russia, bringing wealthy and aristocratic clients to her door. Kauffman's patrons were not so widely spread, but they were numerous and faithful, particularly the two great collectors whose patronage enabled her to continue with her history painting, George Bowles and John Parker.

The two artists, though very different in character and style of painting, shared one overriding feature: their private lives took second place to their working lives. The same applies to the great majority of women who achieved success as professional artists during the eighteenth century." (Chapman, Caroline. *Eighteenth-Century Women Artists*, Unicorn Publishing Group. Kindle Edition)

Rumours of affairs with Reynolds. Swedish count scandal de Horn, fooled her into marriage, an imposter, a valet who had brought his master's clothes. Said he was persuaded by Swedish crown so she must marry immediately. A major scandal, she was so humiliated she moved to Italy and did not marry until after he had died.

Background Information About Women Painters

Women Painters Before 1800

Wikipedia lists 76 women artists in the 18th century.

The Dictionary of Women Artists lists 600 women artists born before 1945:

Sibylla von Bondorf (c.1440 to c.1525),

Susannah Hornebolt (1503-1554), taught by Flemish father, first known woman artist in England

Levina Teerlinc (née Bening, Flemish, 1510s-1576), father taught her,

miniaturist to Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I

Plautilla Nelli (Italian, 1524–1588)

Catharina van Hemessen (1528-1588)

Sofonisba Anguissola (Italian, 1535-1625)

Lavinia Fontana (Italian, 1552-1614)

Barbara Longhi (Italian, 1552–1638)

Artemisia Gentileschi (Italian, 1593-1653)

Joan Carlile (née Palmer, English, 1606-79), self-taught, first British-born woman professional portrait painter

Clara Peeters (Flemish, 1607-1621), still-life

Judith Leyster (Dutch, 1609-1660)

Mary Beale (née Cradock, English, 1633-1699), father was an amateur painter and may have taught her

Elisabetta Sirani (1638-1665)

Susan Penelope Rosse (née Gibson, English, 1652-1700), learnt from father, portrait miniatures

Luisa Roldán (Spanish, 1652–1706)

Anne Killigrew (English, 1660-1685), "A Grace for beauty, and a Muse for wit.", died smallpox aged 25

Rachel Ruysch (Dutch, 1664-1750)

Rosalba Carriera (1673-1757)

Catherine Read (1723-1778), Scottish portrait painter of ladies and children of the aristocracy

Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807), worked in England for 14 years

Mary Moser (English, 1744-1819), taught by father George Moser

Adélaïde Labille-Guiard (1749-1803)

Élizabeth Vigée Le Brun (1755-1842)

Marie-Denise Villers (1774-1821)

British Women Painters Before 1800

Levina Teerlinc (1510/20-1576), daughter off Simon Bening, a renowned illuminator, was a Flemish Renaissance miniaturist who served as a painter to the English court of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I. In Henry

VIII's court she was paid £40 a year, more than Hans Holbein had been paid. It is likely that she helped introduce the portrait miniature to England.

Joan Carlile (c. 1606-79, née Palmer) was one of the first women to practise painting professionally.

Mary Beale (1633-1699)

Susan Penelope Rosse (1652-1700), an English miniaturist who painted for the court of Charles II.

Anne Killigrew (1660-1685), a poet and portrait painter at the court of James II

Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807)

Mary Moser (1744-1819)

Royal Academy Women Painters

Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807), founder member 1768

Mary Moser (1744-1819), founder member 1768

Laura Herford (1831-1870), admitted to the School by mistake in 1860, by 1870 another 34 women had been admitted

1878 petition submitted to RA signed by 35 women asking for study from the figure (semi draped)

1893 after many petitions women were allowed to study the partially draped model, which by then was common across the country

Annie Swynnerton (1844-1933), in 1922 she was elected an Associate Academician

Laura Knight (1877-1970), in 1927 she was elected an Associate and in 1936 an Academician

In 1967 women Academician (four) were allowed to join the annual dinner

References

Wendy Wassing Roworth (ed.), *Angelica Kauffman: A Continental Artist in Georgian England* (London: Reaktion Books, 1992)

Caroline Chapman, *Eighteenth-Century Women Artists: Their Trials, Tribulations and Triumphs* (2017)

Miss Angel: The Art and World of Angelica Kauffman, Eighteenth-Century

Icon (London: Pimlico, 2005)

English Female Artists, 1876, p. 302

<https://www.angelika-kauffmann.de> (Angelica Kauffman Research Project, preparing a Catalogue Raisonee)

https://www.npg.org.uk/assets/migrated_assets/docs/learning/digital/InFocus_AngelicaKauffmann.pdf (her life story)

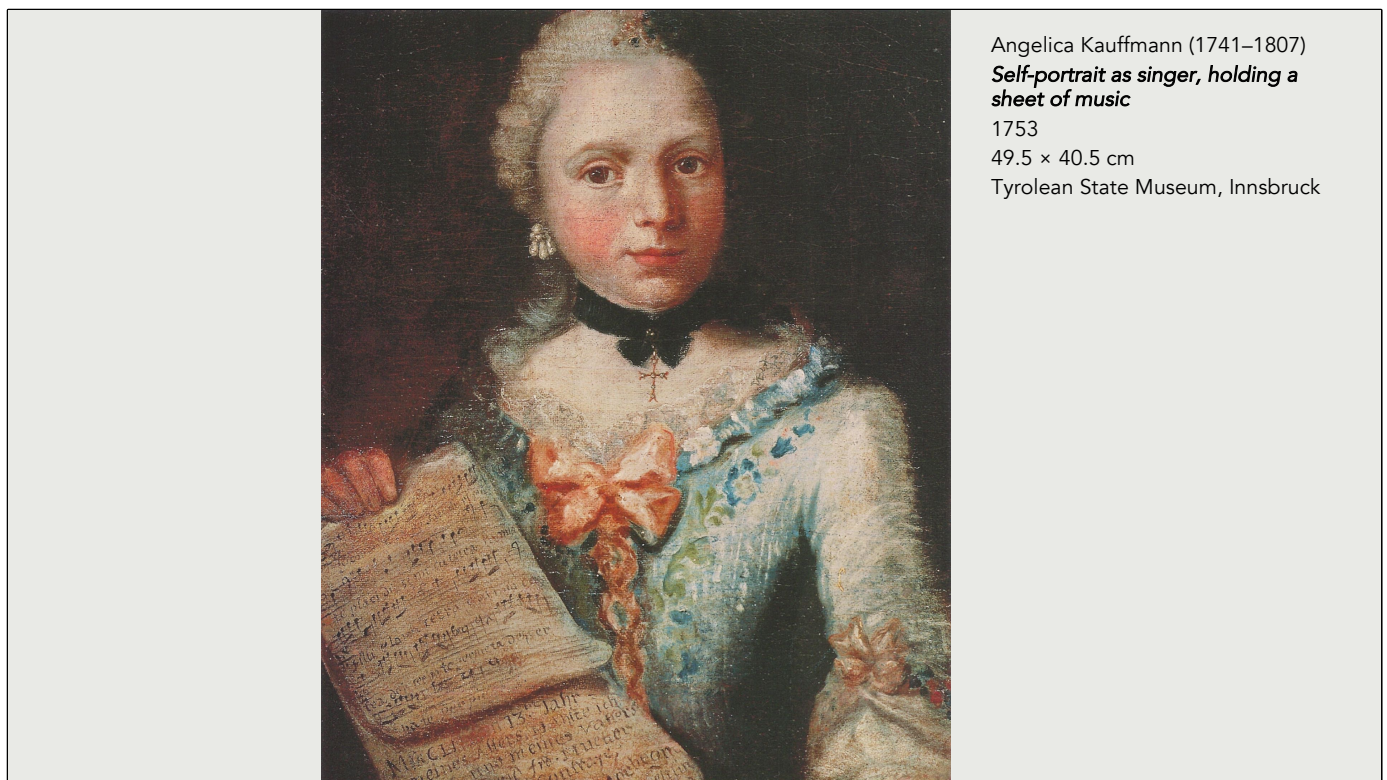
<https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/article/mary-moser-and-angelica-kauffman>

<https://www.apollo-magazine.com/angelica-kauffman-history-painting/>

<https://artherstory.net/angelica-kauffman-and-mary-moser/>

http://hoocher.com/Angelika_Kauffmann/Angelica_Kauffmann.htm

https://www.npg.org.uk/assets/migrated_assets/docs/learning/digital/InFocus_AngelicaKauffmann.pdf (her life story)



Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807)
***Self-portrait as singer, holding a
sheet of music***

1753

49.5 × 40.5 cm

Tyrolean State Museum, Innsbruck

Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807), *Self-portrait as singer, holding a sheet of music*, 1753, 49.5 × 40.5 cm, Tyrolean State Museum, Innsbruck

This early self-portrait, painted when **Angelica Kauffman** was just twelve years old, announces the two great passions that would define her career: painting and music. Born in **Chur**, the oldest town in Switzerland, she grew up speaking German as her native tongue and was trained from childhood by her father, a skilled if impoverished painter who brought her on as his assistant. By the age of ten she was fluent in English, French, and Spanish — a linguistic range that would prove professionally decisive. **Dr John Morgan**, writing in **1774**, described her as possessed of an agreeable person, a sweet and open countenance, and no small proficiency in music. After her mother died when Kauffman was fifteen, she and her father moved through Milan and Florence, where she was elected to the prestigious **Accademia di Disegno** at twenty. The following year in **Rome**, her command of English gave her direct access to wealthy Britons travelling the **Grand Tour**, and she painted portraits for them with remarkable ease. Those patrons carried her reputation back to England long before she set foot there herself, laying the groundwork for the extraordinary reception she would receive in **London**.

Notes

This is her earliest self-portrait and was painted when she was twelve and is her first pairing of her two loves—painting and music, a theme that recurs through her career.

She was born in Chur, allegedly the oldest town in Switzerland where German and Italian are spoken. Her father was poor but a skilled painter who trained Angelica as his assistant.

This is a quote from someone at the time who knew her, "At the age of ten she spoke English and French as familiarly as if they were her native language [and] could read Spanish with equal ease ... she was quite mistress of the Italian, and of German which was her native tongue. She has an agreeable person, a sweet and open countenance, of a very modest, engaging deportment, and was no small proficient in music." (Dr John Morgan, 1774).

Her mother died when she was 15 and she moved with her father to Milan and later Florence where she became a member of the Accademia di Disegno (Academy of Drawing) when she was 20. The following year they moved to Rome where she encountered wealthy Englishmen on the Grand Tour of Europe and as she spoke English she acquired many patrons and painted many portraits. This was one way that her fame spread back to England even before she visited.



Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807)
*Self-portrait of the Artist hesitating
 between the Arts of Music and
 Painting*
 1794
 180 x 249 cm
 Nostell Priory, West Yorkshire

Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807), *Self-portrait of the Artist hesitating between the Arts of Music and Painting*, 1794, 180 x 249 cm, Nostell Priory, West Yorkshire

Angelica Kauffman was a child prodigy in two arts simultaneously — by twelve she was already painting portraits of bishops and nobles, yet her singing voice was so exceptional that music seemed her destined path. A Catholic priest tipped the balance, warning her that opera was filled with seedy people, and she chose painting. At fifty-three she reflected on that decision in this self-portrait, showing herself holding Music's hand with evident reluctance while Painting gestures urgently ahead. Biography and image are inseparable here: the emotional weight is precise and deliberate, not decorative. Her intelligence matched her talent. Fluent in English, Italian, German and French, she travelled Europe with her father, the painter Joseph Johann Kauffmann, and was feted by high society everywhere she went. The philosopher **Johann Gottfried Herder**, whose portrait she painted in **1791**, called her the most cultivated woman in Europe. Arriving in London in **1766**, she became two years later one of the two women among the founding members of the **Royal Academy**, alongside **Mary Moser**. Her style here shows

the soft, multi-layered brushwork she shared with **Joshua Reynolds**, deployed in the service of **Neoclassical** clarity — harmonious colour, composed emotion, and absolute formal control.

Notes

It should be clear that Kauffman was a child prodigy but you may be surprised that at first she was regarded as a music prodigy because of her fine singing voice. However, by the age of twelve she was also known as an outstanding painter with bishops and nobles sitting for her.

Eventually she had to choose between the two arts. Later in her life, when she was 53, she portrayed the choice in this striking self-portrait. She is holding Music's hand as if sorry to leave but Painting is pointing urgently and it looks as if she is about to turn and follow. It is said a Catholic priest singing would be easy for her but painting would require long and arduous training and he persuaded her by telling her that opera was a dangerous place filled with "seedy people".

She was extremely intelligent and was quickly fluent in English, Italian, German and French. It was said she spoke these languages as fluently as a native speaker. She travelled all round Europe with her father and everywhere she went she was feted by high society for her talents and charm. There was something about her that charmed everyone she met from artists to royalty. The German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), whose portrait she painted in 1791, described her as 'A heavenly creature ... perhaps the most cultivated woman in the whole of Europe.'

This painting is typical of her late style—strong but harmonious colours, a soft-brush multi-layered style typical of Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792) and Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788) although late Gainsborough is a more bravura style of rapid brushstrokes particularly for the drapery.

She came to the UK in 1766 and two years later was one of the two women founders of the Royal Academy...

Notes

Angelica Kauffman Royal Academician, Foundation Member, Elected RA: 10 December 1768, Born: 30 October 1741, Died: 5 November 1807.

Maria Anna Angelika Kauffmann, born 278 years ago—she became famous across Europe as a Neoclassical painter. She specialised in history paintings, portraits, landscapes and decorations. Her father, artist Joseph Johann

Kauffmann, trained his daughter. She worked as his assistant as the family moved through Switzerland, Austria and Italy. She had a successful career in London and Rome. She was, along with Mary Moser, one of two female painters among the founding members of the Royal Academy in London in 1768.

"In a career that took in London, Dublin, Florence, Rome and Naples, Paris, Warsaw and St. Petersburg, Weimar and Vienna, she was known as the "Female Raphael of the Arts." Her oeuvre includes some 800 oil paintings on canvas or copper, 13 frescos, 400 drawings, a small number of early pastels, and 41 etchings. Although a number of these are in private hands, many can be seen at the rotating exhibits of Austria's Angelika Kauffmann Museum (established 2007), as well as at numerous other museums throughout the world." ¹

References

<https://artherstory.net/angelica-kauffman-and-mary-moser/>



Johann Zoffany (1733-1810)
*The Portraits of the
 Academicians of the Royal
 Academy*
 1771-72
 Royal Collection

Johann Zoffany (1733-1810), *The Portraits of the Academicians of the Royal Academy*, 1771-72, Royal Collection

Johann Zoffany's painting of the Royal Academy Academicians, completed in 1771, makes the institutional exclusion of women artists visible in a single image. Every male member stands in the life-drawing room; the two female founders, **Mary Moser** and **Angelica Kauffman**, appear only as portraits hung on the wall. No formal rule banned them, but attending a class with a naked male model was considered wholly indecent for women. This exclusion had serious professional consequences. Life drawing was the foundation of academic training, and mastery of the male figure was considered essential for **history painting**, ranked at the very top of the **hierarchy of genres**. Without access to the life class, women were structurally barred from the highest form of artistic ambition. The **Royal Academy** excluded women from full membership until the twentieth century, despite those two founding members. **Laura Herford** gained entry to the RA Schools in **1860** only because she submitted work under the initial L. Herford, concealing her sex. Women remained confined to cast drawing and the draped model for decades. The **Slade School**, founded in **1871**, accepted women from the outset, and private

ateliers in Paris and Munich offered further alternatives. Even so, the structural disadvantage was profound, and understanding it is essential to appreciating what any ambitious woman artist of this period actually achieved.

Notes

Before embarking on her life's work I need to set the scene by talking about the difficulties faced by women artist, the then established hierarchy of painting and the particular problems faced by a woman artist by history painting.

Who has seen this painting before?

This is a famous painting by the artist Johann Zoffany and shows the Academicians of the Royal Academy. It was painted in 1771, three years after the Academy was founded and it shows all the members of the Academy but the two female founders are portraits on the wall. (CLICK) One is Mary Moser (1744-1819), one of the most celebrated artists of 18th-century Britain, and the other is the even more famous (CLICK) Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807).

Why aren't they in the room?

This is a life drawing class with a naked man. There was not actually a rule banning them but it would have been unthinkable, highly improper and indecent for them to attend.

Why was it important to attend?

The main activity of the Royal Academy School was to teach life drawing as this was regarded as the most difficult skill to acquire. Students started by drawing casts of classical figures and it was only when these drawings were regarded as proficient that they were allowed to attend the life drawing class. Most life drawing was of men as it was regarded as important to represent men accurately in the highest form of art, namely history painting, of which more later.

What is odd about this life drawing class?

Only one member has any drawing implements and that is bottom left, a self-portrait of Johann Zoffany holding his palette. The other members are all discussing the pose demonstrating that art is not just a mechanical skill but one that engages the intellect and a good understanding of classical literature. They could be discussing a classical pose as part of a history

painting. It is not going too far to say that the Royal Academy was created in order to further the art of history painting in England. Thanks to Angelica Kauffman and Benjamin West (the second president) it did become popular for a brief period before portraits, landscapes, houses, horses and dogs took over again.

History of Women at the RA

The RA excluded women until 1860 even though two of the founding members were women.

In 1860 Laura Herford's (1831-1870) was accepted for the RA School based on a painting using her initial 'L. Herford'. This was at the suggestion of the President Sir Charles Eastlake. Thirteen other women were accepted over the next few years. Women were only allowed to draw from casts and the draped model. Women were excluded from the life class although there was some provision made in 1893. In 1863 the Council decided its constitution did not allow women painters (in the Instrument of Foundation, Academicians ... shall all of them be ... Men of fair moral Characters'). In 1903 women were allowed to study living nudes in separate classes.

Slade took women from its founding in 1871.

The Society of Female Artists was founded in 1856, it became the Society of Lady Artists in 1872 and the Society of Women Artists in 1899.

1870s and 80s women petitioned RA in vain to attend life classes.

There were private art schools 1880s and 90s like French atelier

Rich women attended classes in Paris, Munich, Dusseldorf and Antwerp

Lady Butler was nominated three times to the RA 1879-81 and turned down.

Annie Laura Swynnerton and Laura Knight (1877-1970, née Johnson, attended Nottingham School of Art 1890-4, aged 13) were made ARA in the 1920s and Laura Knight a RA in 1936.

Note

Kauffman on left, Mary Moser (1744-1819) on right.

Moser's father George Moser putting on the noose.

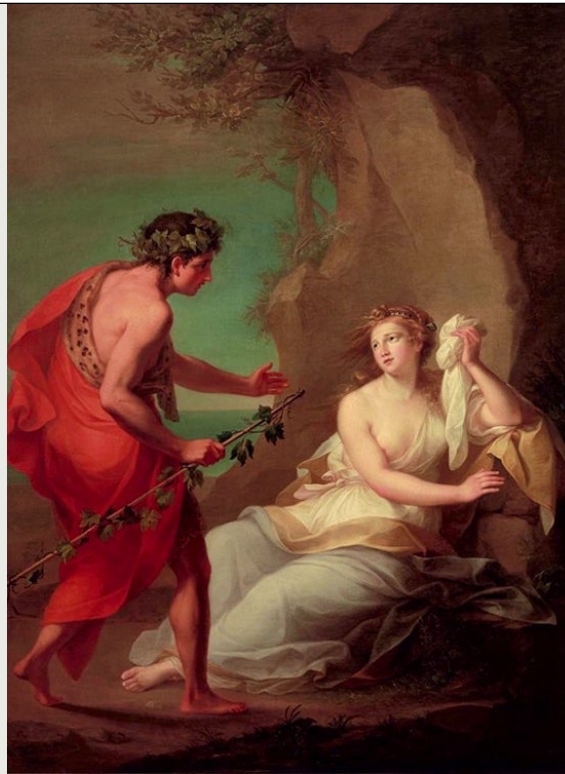
Richard Cosway (1742-1821, RA 1770), Moser's lover bottom-right with cane (the canvas was extended to include him). Cosway was separated from his wife Maria. Maria ('Mariah') Cosway (1760-1838, born Hadfield) was a gifted artist who gave up her career on the command of her husband. He did possibly to protect her reputation and in time she started to paint again. She

was an Italian-English artist who had an affair with Thomas Jefferson, American Founding Father, principal author of the Declaration of Independence 1776 and third President of the US. They corresponded for the rest of their lives. She was a devout catholic all her life. It was thought to be a marriage of convenience as he was 20 years her senior and a libertine. Cosway was once a more famous artist than Gainsborough and his portraits were the rage in Regency London. He became Principal Painter to the Prince of Wales.

In October 1793, Mary Moser married Hugh Lloyd and retired from painting, only exhibiting as an amateur. Shortly after the marriage, in 1793, Cosway and Mary Moser had an open affair that lasted 6 months during which they travelled around Europe. Mary Moser was 50 and his ex-wife Maria 33 yet he described her as 'more sexually responsive' in bed.

Angelica Kauffman was Swiss born Austrian who was taught by her father. She acquired several languages and was a skilled musician. It is not known how she learnt to paint the male nude as her speciality was history painting. Her first marriage was a disaster but in 1781 he died (she had been separated) and she married Antonio Zucchi a Venetian artist and retired to Rome where she met Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Zucchi died in 1795 and she continued to contribute to the RA her last exhibit was 1797 and she died in 1807. She was honoured at her funeral in the same way Raphael had been honoured.

There was a tradition of representing absent but venerated members of a body through *imago clipeata* (literally 'portraits on a round shield from the practice in the Roman world of showing ancestors and famous people on round shields in people's homes).



Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807)
***Bacchus discovers Ariadne,
abandoned by Theseus, on Naxos***
1764
166 × 125 cm
Kulturamt der Landeshauptstadt
Bregenz

Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807), *Bacchus discovers Ariadne, abandoned by Theseus, on Naxos*, 1764, 166 × 125 cm, Kulturamt der Landeshauptstadt Bregenz

Having established that women were excluded from life drawing classes, we now confront a direct question: how did **Angelica Kauffman** paint convincing figures at all? This work depicts the moment **Bacchus** discovers **Ariadne** on the island of **Naxos**, after the Athenian hero **Theseus** abandoned her there. The subject had attracted artists for generations — **Titian's** treatment being among the most celebrated — but the choice was not decorative. It was a declaration of ambition. **History painting** stood at the top of the academic hierarchy precisely because it demanded the most of its maker. The artist was required to master classical and biblical texts, identify the pivotal moment in a narrative, and then communicate, through gesture and expression alone, how protagonists endured tragedy and adversity. Ariadne's face must hold both grief for Theseus and a tremor of response to the approaching god. Kauffman resolves this in favour of sorrow; Titian chose startled shock. Men of the **Royal Academy** argued women lacked the classical education and rational faculty history painting required. Kauffman demolished that argument. She was

called the exception that proved the rule — but in the original sense of *proved*: she tested it, and found it false.

Notes

Kauffman painted portraits and history paintings and this is her first full-size history painting. I just explained that women never entered a life drawing class which was essential training for painting realistic bodies. So how did she acquire the necessary skills. We don't know but I will give you some evidence on the next slide.

First the subject, the painting shows the young Bacchus discovering Ariadne on the island of Naxos, after she was abandoned by the Greek hero Theseus. The theme has been painted by many artists including Le Nain in c. 1635 and (CLICK) perhaps the most famous is Titian's Bacchus and Ariadne.

But what exactly was a history painting and why were they regarded as so important?

A history painting was not just a painting of a historic subject, the most important aspect was that it was noble and elevated the spirit by reminding us of the best and the worst of the human condition and how heroes of the past had dealt with adversity and pain.

The artist was expected to know all the classical and biblical texts and use their imagination to select the critical turning point of the narrative and then show us through gesture and expression how the protagonists dealt with the tragedy.

Here, Ariadne has just been abandoned by the love of her life and she is mourning her loss when a handsome young man, Bacchus, expresses his love for her. Her expression must incorporate mourning for her loss with a glimmer of interest in the approaching figure. Kauffman has gone for mostly sadness in her face and Titian has gone for startled.

(CLICK) Why were history paintings important—because they reminded us of the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune and the most noble way in which the heroes of the past had dealt with the most serious episodes of life.

History paintings shows the best of us. Today we do not know the stories so they just look like odd people in funny clothes.

It was felt by men at the time that history painting required a deep knowledge of classical history and the ability to use reason and imagination to communicate the noble spirit of the story and this was not possible for a

woman.

As women were in general not given a classical education and as it was thought they were driven by their emotions rather than reason it was felt they were incapable of painting a history painting. In addition, they could not attend life drawing classes which were essential training.

So how did Kauffman do it? She was regarded as a one-off, the exception that proved the rule. Of course, the word 'prove' is meant in the old sense of 'test' and we now know Kauffman tested the rule and found it wrong.

Properly educated and trained a woman could paint a history painting as well as a man.

Notes

The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune is from Shakespeare's Hamlet, the 'to be or not to be' speech, Act III, Scene I.

The Athenian Theseus came to Crete and killed the Minotaur with the help of Ariadne who advised him to leave a trail of string. They flee to Naxos and Theseus abandons the sleeping Ariadne. Some accounts involve Bacchus (Greek: Dionysus, son of Zeus) finding her and taking her for his bride.

Theseus sailed back to Athens and forgot to put up the white sails instead of the black ones, so his father Aegeus, the king, believing he was dead, committed suicide, throwing himself off a cliff of Sounion and into the sea, thus causing this body of water to be named the Aegean Sea. Theseus became the founding father of Athens.



Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807),
Standing Male,
1763

Angelica Kauffman (1741–1807), *Standing Male*, 1763

The few surviving drawings by **Angelica Kauffman** reveal that, at least in her early twenties, she drew from the male nude — almost certainly with her father Johann Joseph Kauffman arranging and chaperoning those sessions. This was unknown to her contemporaries, who assumed her figures derived from statues or female models. The critic who dismissed her figures as "girls in disguise" was typical of a broader scepticism. **Peter Pindar** mocked her male figures in verse, and one journalist stated flatly that women's "compulsive delicacy" prevented them from studying nudity and muscular motion, limiting them to pretty faces and graceful attitudes. A rumour circulated that Kauffman had privately hired **Charles Cranmer**, a Royal Academy employee, to pose in London. Decades later, the elderly Cranmer confirmed he had modelled for her, but insisted he had exposed only his arms, shoulders, and legs, and that her father was always present. Despite this sustained doubt about her training, Kauffman was widely regarded as a serious **history painter** — the most prestigious category in the **academic hierarchy of genres**, a ranking that governed how artists, patrons, and institutions measured ambition and achievement, and which we turn to next.

Notes

So how did Kaufman find models for her history painting? We don't know. At the time the assumption was that they were based on statues or women models.

These drawings give us a clue. These few drawings by Angelica Kauffman have been found showing that at least early on in her career when she was 22-23 years old she did draw from the male nude. As her father was an artist he may have arranged it and attended.

But this was not known at the time, so one critic wrote that all her figures were 'girls in disguise'. A poet (Peter Pinder) wrote 'Her dames, so Grecian, give me such delight!/But, were she married to such gentle males/As figure in her painted tales,/I fear she'd find a stupid wedding-night'.

A journalist wrote '[Women's] situation in life, and compulsive delicacy, prevents them from studying nudities, and comparing these studies with muscular motion, though without such aid, they cannot do more than this lady has effected, which is, to design pretty faces and graceful attitudes, without any authority from nature to warrant the transaction.'

There was a rumour that, in London, she had hired an employee of the Royal Academy (Charles Cranmer) to pose privately. Years later the eighty-year-old former model admitted that he had modelled for her but had never exposed more than his arms, shoulders and legs and that Angelica's father had always been in attendance. So we are left to wonder, as she was, despite the quotes, considered a fine history painter. I can only assume that with her father's help she did have the right training and access to models.

I have said that history painting was important but I need to clarify that it was the most important type of painting by far. There was a hierarchy of types of painting that we will look at next...



Annibale Carracci (1560–1609)
The Choice of Hercules
1596
165 × 239 cm
National Museum of Capodimonte

Annibale Carracci (1560–1609), *The Choice of Hercules*, 1596, 165 × 239 cm, National Museum of Capodimonte

The **hierarchy of genres** placed different types of painting in a strict ranked order, and every artist and connoisseur in the eighteenth century understood exactly where each work stood within it. The hierarchy originated in Renaissance Italy, where **Leon Battista Alberti**, **Leonardo da Vinci**, and **Giorgio Vasari** debated painting's intellectual status, and it was formalised for the following century by the French theorist **André Félibien** in 1667. At the top sat **history painting**, as in **Annibale Carracci's** *Choice of Hercules*, which demanded anatomical knowledge, mastery of classical literature, and the ability to render noble moral choices in expressive figures. Portrait painting ranked second, followed by genre scenes, landscape, animal painting, and at the very bottom, still life. The hierarchy rested on a Platonic distinction between idealism and mere copying. Still life was dismissed as mechanical reproduction of a particular appearance, whilst history painting rendered universal moral truths visible. **George Stubbs's** *Whistlejacket* deliberately challenged this order by presenting a horse on the monumental scale reserved for history painting. The audacious plain background, reputedly the

idea of the **Marquess of Rockingham**, made the challenge impossible to ignore, and the painting forced audiences to reconsider where animal painting truly belonged.

Notes

History painting was at the top of the hierarchy of painting, sometimes called the hierarchy of genres, that is types of painting.

The hierarchies of painting were established in 16th century Italy, that is during the Renaissance, and it was refined by the French Academy. It held sway for some 300 hundred years and was formalised, reinforced and promoted by all the art academies across Europe.

(CLICK) At the top of the hierarchy was history painting. This is an example that you might recognise. It is called *The choice of Hercules* by Annibale Carracci and I have just shown you a similar choice. Do you recognise the arrangement of figures? Yes, it is Kauffman's choice between Music and Painting. She would have known the painting well as it is in the Capodimonte in Naples. Hercules choice was seen as a clear example of a history painting. He must choose between the easy path of pleasure and the hard path of virtue. A history painting required a detailed knowledge of anatomy which was thought to be impossible for a woman artist to learn. History painting also required a detailed knowledge of classical literature as the artist had to capture the exact moment and the feelings captured in the faces to express the noble thoughts that would elevate the painting beyond a mere mechanical painting of models.

(CLICK) Next down the hierarchy was portrait painting. This is by the first President of the Royal Academy. Who was it by? Yes, Joshua Reynolds. Reynolds tried to elevate portraits to a type of history painting by giving his portraits a classical setting.

(CLICK) The third type was called genre or subject painting. It had to contain one or more people but it was not a portrait. The people were there to set the scene or tell a story but it might be humorous not elevating and noble. It was painted, unusually by a nobleman, Nathaniel Bacon (1585–1627), and is the first subject painting in the history of English art and it is in Tate Britain.

(CLICK) The final three categories were rarely painted during the Renaissance. There was landscape painting which might contain humans but only as part of the landscape. Such human additions are called staffage, merely human or

animal accessories. Who knows this painting? It is by Thomas Gainsborough another contemporary of Angelica Kauffman.

(CLICK) Fifth down the hierarchy was animal painting. Animals were admired for their beauty or they could represent human emotions. Who knows this painting? It is Whistlejacket by George Stubbs. The audacious plain background said to be the idea of the owner the Marquess of Rockingham created a stir and challenged the hierarchy of painting and the lowly place of animal painting.

(CLICK) Finally, the lowest of the low was still-life which included flower painting. Still-life could be elevating as there was a type of still-life called memento mori, literally 'remember you have to die'. Such painting might contain a skull or perhaps a wilting flower. This is a Dutch flower painting from the previous century by Balthasar van der Ast. Note the insects, more about why flower painting became popular next week.

All artists and connoisseurs at this time would have instantly categorised each type of painting within the strict hierarchy. The hierarchy reflected a Platonic belief in idealism over realism. Copying something from nature realistically was regarded as a basic skill that anyone could acquire with training. The lowest category, still life, was regarded as a 'mechanical copying of a particular appearance' whereas history painting rendered visible the universal essence of things and their most noble and uplifting spirit.

Notes

The hierarchy arose from philosophical debates about the relative importance of painting with respect to poetry, sculpture and architecture as intellectual activities. Leon Battista Alberti, Leonardo da Vinci, and Giorgio Vasari were all concerned and debated the question. During the Renaissance landscape, genre scenes and still lifes hardly existed as established genres, and so the debate was with respect to history including biblical subjects compared to portraits.

The new genres of landscape, genre painting, animal painting and still-life developed during the 17th century, with the virtual cessation of religious painting in Protestant countries, and the expansion of picture buying by the prosperous middle class. The hierarchy was extended in 1667 by André Félibien, a historiographer, architect and theoretician of French classicism and this became the classic statement of the theory for the 18th century as shown

here.

Whistlejacket—One of the most important British paintings of the eighteenth century, Whistlejacket is probably the most well-known portrait of a horse. It is also widely acknowledged to be George Stubb's masterpiece. The Arabian chestnut stallion had won a famous victory at York in 1759, but by 1762 had been retired from racing. He belonged to the 2nd Marquess of Rockingham, who commissioned Stubbs to paint a commemorative life-size portrait of his prize horse on a scale that was more appropriate for a group portrait or historical painting.

Lady Talbot—this is a full-length, life-size portrait of a contemporary female aristocrat which was originally exhibited as 'Portrait of a Lady' but which we now know was Lady Talbot. It was commissioned by her husband the 1st Earl Talbot as a companion to his portrait painted by Pompeo Batoni when he on the Grand Tour. The statue in the background is Minerva the goddess of wisdom and strength and it gives the painting a classical dimension. Lord Talbot had a classical sculpture known as the Ludovisi Mars (in the national Museum, Rome) representing martial values. Typically, the man wears contemporary dress while, as here, his wife wears a more playful historicising fancy dress.



Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807)
***The Tender Eleanora Sucking the
 Venom out of the Wound which
 Edward I, her Royal Consort,
 Received from a Poisoned Dagger
 from an Assassin in Palestine***
 c. 1780
 86.4 x 106.7 cm
 The Huntington Art Museum

Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807), *The Tender Eleanora Sucking the Venom out of the Wound which Edward I, her Royal Consort, Received from a Poisoned Dagger from an Assassin in Palestine*, c. 1780, 86.4 x 106.7 cm, The Huntington Art Museum

The hierarchy of genres placed history painting at its summit, yet England offered almost no market for it — a problem **Angelica Kauffman** solved not by painting better than her rivals, but by reinventing how history painting reached its audience. Her contemporaries **Benjamin West** and **John Singleton Copley**, both American-born, modernised the genre by depicting recent events rather than classical subjects. **Henry Fuseli** brought supernatural intensity to historical scenes, and **James Barry** produced sweeping panoramic cycles. Of all of them, Kauffman stayed closest to the European ideal of history painting, and alongside West she made it, briefly, fashionable in Britain. Her genius was commercial as much as artistic. She exploited two markets more aggressively than any rival: engravings and the decoration of luxury commodities. Her partnership with engraver and publisher **William Wynne Ryland** proved transformative. Ryland's personal fortune by **1783** — shares, pension, stock, and business income together exceeding nineteen

thousand pounds — illustrates the scale of demand her images generated. Works such as her **1776** painting of Eleanor of Castile sucking poison from Edward the First's wound were engraved and sold widely. As Wendy Wassyng Roworth established, more engravings after Kauffman were purchased than after any other painter of standing in the **eighteenth century**.

Notes

The hierarchy of painting was mostly a French invention but the hierarchy was followed in England and reinforced by the Royal Academy. In France the government and every town hall bought history paintings creating a large market for the highest genre. In England there was almost no market for history painting so that created a problem for artists—the highest form of painting made no money.

So how did Kauffman earn a fortune from history painting? She did not just do better than the men she reinvented the market.

The only other painters in England who were successful in history painter were foreign. Benjamin West (1738-1820) and John Singleton Copley (1738-1815) both from America reinvented the genre by painting modern day scenes rather than classical history paintings. The Swiss painter Henry Fuseli (1741-1825) created supernatural renditions of historical subjects and the Irishman James Barry (1795-1865) created sweeping panoramas of historic and biblical subjects. Of all of them Angelica Kauffman was the closest to the European ideal of the history painting and it was her and Benjamin West that made history painting, at least for a short time, fashionable.

But how did Kauffman make money from history painting? There were two markets she exploited more than any other artist of this period, (CLICK) engravings and the decoration of commodities. She worked with William Wynne Ryland who has been described as the person most responsible for spreading Kauffman's fame as one of the most prolific engravers and publishers of history paintings. He was extraordinarily successful. In 1783 he had shares worth £7,000, a royal pension of £200 annually, stock worth £10,000 and a business income of £2,000 a year.

Kauffman and Benjamin West were the first members of the Royal Academy to exhibit paintings from British history (1771), even though "the Society of Artists had offered premiums since 1760 for paintings of British History". Angelica Kauffman painted *The Tender Eleanora Sucking the Venom out of*

the Wound which Edward I, her Royal Consort, Received from a Poisoned Dagger from an Assassin in Palestine (1776) which was engraved by Ryland. As we have seen from Ryland's income the engravings sold very well, in fact more of her engravings were bought "more than any other painter of standing in the eighteenth century".[1] They were serious subjects that could be afforded by the up and coming middle-class merchants and professionals of the period.

References

1. Ed. Wendy Wassyng Roworth, Angelica Kauffman: A Continental Artist in Georgian England, (London: Reaktion Books, 1992), p. 178

Angelica Kauffman (1741–1807)

Vase and Cover with Celadon and Amelia

Soft-paste porcelain painted with enamels and gilded



Angelica Kauffman (1741–1807), Vase and Cover with Celadon and Amelia

Building on her reputation as a painter of classical subjects, **Angelica Kauffman** found a second and equally lucrative career in decorative design. The sheer range of objects bearing her compositions tells you everything about her cultural status in late eighteenth-century Britain: watch cases, snuff boxes, plates, and vases all carried her classical scenes, purchased by buyers eager to signal learning and refinement. During her **fourteen years** in London, demand for her work only intensified. This vase and cover in **soft-paste porcelain**, painted with enamels and gilded, is a precise example of how her imagery circulated. Acanthus leaves in relief ring the body in blue, and two oval medallions face each other across the vessel. One shows a landscape; the other depicts **Celadon and Amelia**, a scene Kauffman returned to in several versions. The subject comes from **James Thomson's** poem "**The Seasons**", specifically the section titled Summer, published in **1727**. Thomson's young lovers are caught in a violent storm; Amelia is struck down by lightning and dies in Celadon's arms. It is a scene of tender catastrophe — exactly the kind of elevated, emotionally legible narrative that made Kauffman's designs so sought after for domestic objects meant to impress.

Notes

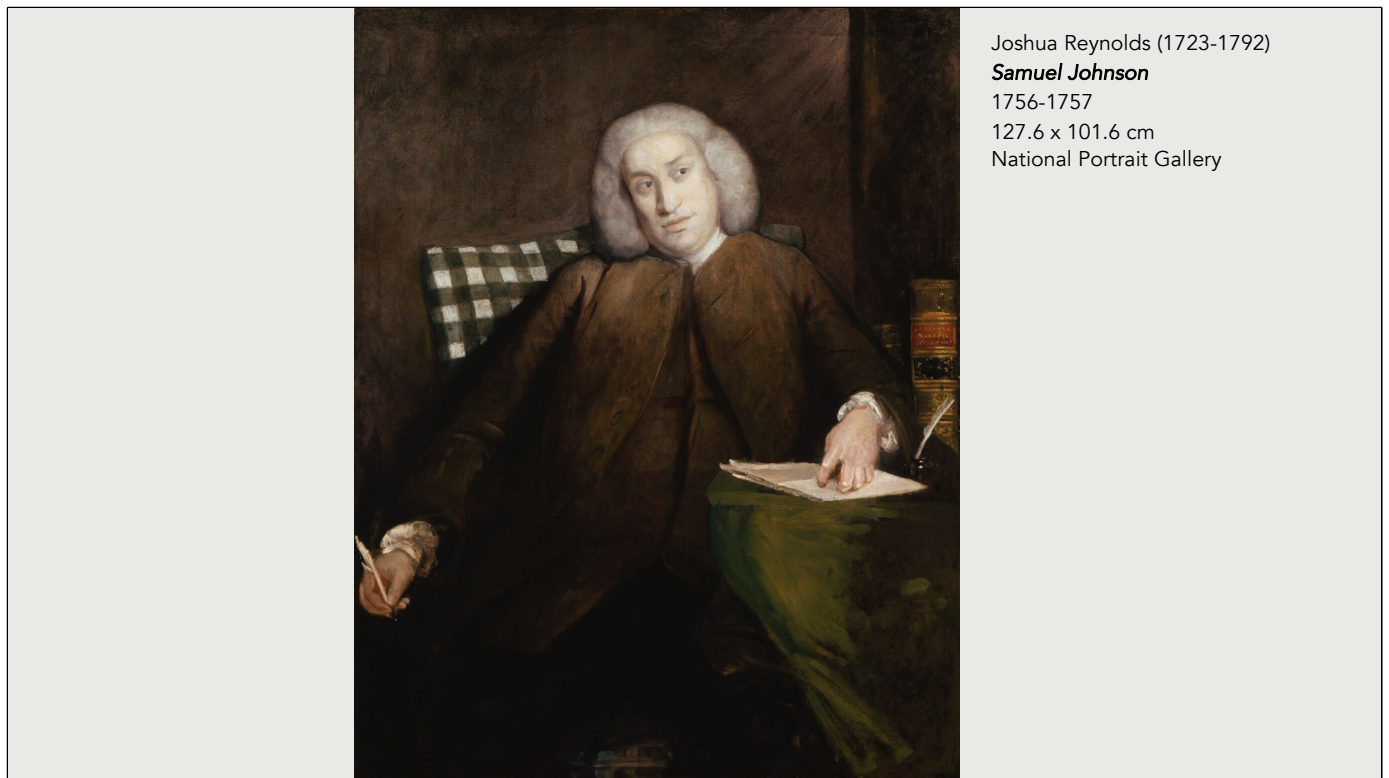
The other source of her income and fame was decorative designs for household objects. To understand how famous she was you need to understand that an enormous range of household goods were covered in works by Kauffman from watch cases to plates and from snuff boxes to vases. Everyone wanted household objects like this with a serious Kauffman classical design to show their knowledge and sophistication. Kauffman lived in London for fourteen years and throughout this time her reputation and fame grew.

Notes

This vase and cover is soft-paste porcelain painted with enamels and gilded. It is decorated with acanthus leaves in relief and coloured blue and with an oval medallion on either side of the body. One medallion has a landscape and the other a figure subject based on a classical scene by Kauffman of Celadon and Amelia.

A Romantic English nature poem, "The Seasons," by James Thompson in the section 'Summer' tells of the young lovers Celadon and Amelia, a perfect couple who were caught in a summer storm. Amelia was overcome by the powerful force of the tempest and died in the arms of her horrified and distraught lover.

Kauffman painted a number of versions of story and the two lovers.



Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792)
Samuel Johnson
1756-1757
127.6 x 101.6 cm
National Portrait Gallery

Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792), Samuel Johnson, 1756-1757, 127.6 x 101.6 cm, National Portrait Gallery

This portrait by **Joshua Reynolds**, painted in **1755**, shows **Samuel Johnson** shortly after he completed his Dictionary of the English Language — twelve years before the Royal Academy's founding. Reynolds never finished it, and the canvas stayed in his studio until 1798, when it passed to Johnson's biographer **James Boswell**. Johnson himself complained that women staring at men's faces while painting their portraits was indelicate — revealing exactly the prejudice that constrained women artists of the period. To be the sustained object of a female gaze, with all its analytical implications, clearly unsettled him. That prejudice pushed many women artists toward portraits of women and children, where their supposed gift for flattery was considered appropriate. **Angelica Kauffman** refused that boundary. She painted English gentlemen, aristocrats, the art historian **Johann Joachim Winckelmann**, and Reynolds himself — making her simultaneously the gazing subject and the object of countless gazes directed back at her. The greater barrier, though, was **history painting**. As Wendy Roworth argued directly, what distinguishes Kauffman from virtually all women artists before the twentieth century was her

deliberate ambition to achieve standing as a **history painter** — the most prestigious category in the academic hierarchy.

Notes

This is by Joshua Reynolds 12 years before the Royal Academy was founded. It is a portrait of Samuel Johnson just after he completed his famous Dictionary of the English Language in 1755. The painting was never finished and remained in Reynolds studio until 1798 when it was given to his biographer James Boswell.

The reason I am showing you this is that Johnson said about women painting men's portraits, "Staring in men's faces is very indelicate in a female". It was probably disconcerting for Dr. Johnson to be the object of a sustained female gaze, with its implications of analysis and evaluation.

This prejudice was a problem for any woman artist and so many painted women and children. Women, it was commonly and casually said, understood how to flatter their female subjects. Kauffman overcame this prejudice and painted men as well: English gentlemen and aristocrats, J. J. Winckelmann, and Joshua Reynolds, among many others. She was both the gazing subject and the object of many gazes.

There was an even greater prejudice regarding women and history painting. The art historian Wendy Roworth wrote, "What distinguishes Kauffman from most artists active in England during the eighteenth century, and from virtually all women artists before the twentieth, was her ambition to achieve standing as a history painter".[1]

References

Ed. Wendy Wassyng Roworth, *Angelica Kauffman: A Continental Artist in Georgian England*, (London: Reaktion Books, 1992), p. 21

Patricia Crown, 'Eighteenth Century Visual Culture and Current British Art History: A Review Essay', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 28, no. 1 (1994), pp. 137-40



Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807)
Portrait of Winckelmann
1764
97 × 71 cm
Kunsthhaus, Zürich

Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807), Portrait of Winckelmann, 1764, 97 × 71 cm, Kunsthhaus, Zürich

Returning now to Kauffman's biography, we reach a pivotal Roman moment. In **1764**, two years before her move to England, Kauffman completed her **Portrait of Johann Joachim Winckelmann**, a figure whose reputation at the time was unrivalled in European intellectual life. Winckelmann, born in Stendal in 1717, was by then prefect of the Vatican's antiquities collection and is recognised as the founder of art history as a discipline. That same year he published his **History of Ancient Art**, a work that galvanised enthusiasm for antiquity across Europe. Kauffman shows him reading, his book resting on a bas-relief of **The Three Graces** — a direct allusion to his 1759 essay on grace in art. Winckelmann himself called this portrait his finest likeness. Alongside it we see a **Gainsborough** self-portrait from roughly the same period. Where Kauffman is precise and controlled, Gainsborough's handling is loose and suggestive, particularly in the cuff and cravat. Both works belong to a culture in which portraiture dominated. **André Roquet**, writing in 1755, noted that portrait painting was the most encouraged and most followed genre in **eighteenth-century England** — a social reality that shaped every ambitious

painter's career.

Notes

Let us return to the chronology of Kauffman's life.

This was painted in 1764 two years before she came to England. It is Portrait of Winckelmann and was produced in Rome. Has anyone heard of Johann Winckelmann? He was very famous at the time as an archaeologist and art historian. In fact, he is considered the first art historian.

We see Winckelmann reading from a book, which is resting on a bas-relief showing The Three Graces. The year this was painted he published his influential History of Ancient Art. He described this portrait as his best.

(CLICK) I am showing Kauffman's work alongside Gainsborough self-portrait as they were painted at about the same time. Notice the loose paintwork Gainsborough uses for the cuff and the cravat. His early Ipswich period (1746-1760) was more formal, thorough and meticulous, like that of Reynolds and Kauffman. His middle Bath period (1760-1774) became more lively and delicate. His late London period (1774-1788) is marked by his extraordinarily delicate and suggestive handling of paint which enabled him to catch a likeness.

Portraiture was the most popular genre or type of painting in eighteenth-century English society. One French observer (André Roquet, The Present State of the Arts in England, 1755) "Portraiture is the kind of painting the most encouraged, and consequently the most followed in England; it is the polite custom, even for men, to present one another with their pictures ... A portrait painter in England makes his fortune in a very extraordinary manner. As soon as he has obtained a certain degree of reputation, he hires a house fit for a person of distinction; then he assumes an air of importance and superiority over the rest of his profession, depending less on his personal abilities to support this superiority than on the credit of some powerful friend, or some woman of quality, whose protection he has purchased, and which he sometimes courts, not much to his honour." I don't think this applies to either artist here but it does show the importance attached to portrait painting in English society.

Notes

"Johann Joachim Winckelmann (Stendal 1717 - Trieste 1768) is considered the founder of German art, science and archaeology. In 1763 he became

prefect of the Vatican's collection of antiquities and scriptor of the Vatican Library. In 1755 he published "Thoughts on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture", in 1764 the "History of Ancient Art", which contributed significantly to the enthusiasm for antiquity of that time. The opened book is resting on an antique relief with The Three Graces, which refers to Winckelmann's 1759 publication "On Grace in Works of Art". Winckelmann himself described the portrait as his best.



Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807)
Portrait of David Garrick
1764
84 × 69 cm
Burghley House

Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807), *Portrait of David Garrick*, 1764, 84 × 69 cm, Burghley House

Having established Kauffman's reputation among Englishmen travelling in Italy, we turn now to her decisive move to London. **Lady Bridget Wentworth Murray**, wife of the British ambassador to Venice, invited Kauffman to London in 1765, opening high society to her almost immediately. The royal family received her warmly, and Kauffman wasted no time converting social access into professional opportunity. Her portrait of **David Garrick** — actor, playwright, and theatre manager, and one of the most recognisable faces in Britain — was exhibited at the **Free Society of Artists** before it reached its patron, a calculated move that announced her talent to the widest possible audience. The pose she chose derives from a **Frans Hals** portrait of a close friend, signalling her fluency in the Northern European tradition even as she worked within British portraiture conventions. Contemporaries consistently described Kauffman as gentle and considerate, yet those qualities never blunted what was, in practice, a precise and unsentimental business intelligence. She understood that in London, visibility was currency, and she spent it shrewdly. Her early career in Britain demonstrates that artistic

ambition and commercial strategy were, for Kauffman, never in conflict — they were the same project pursued by different means.

Notes

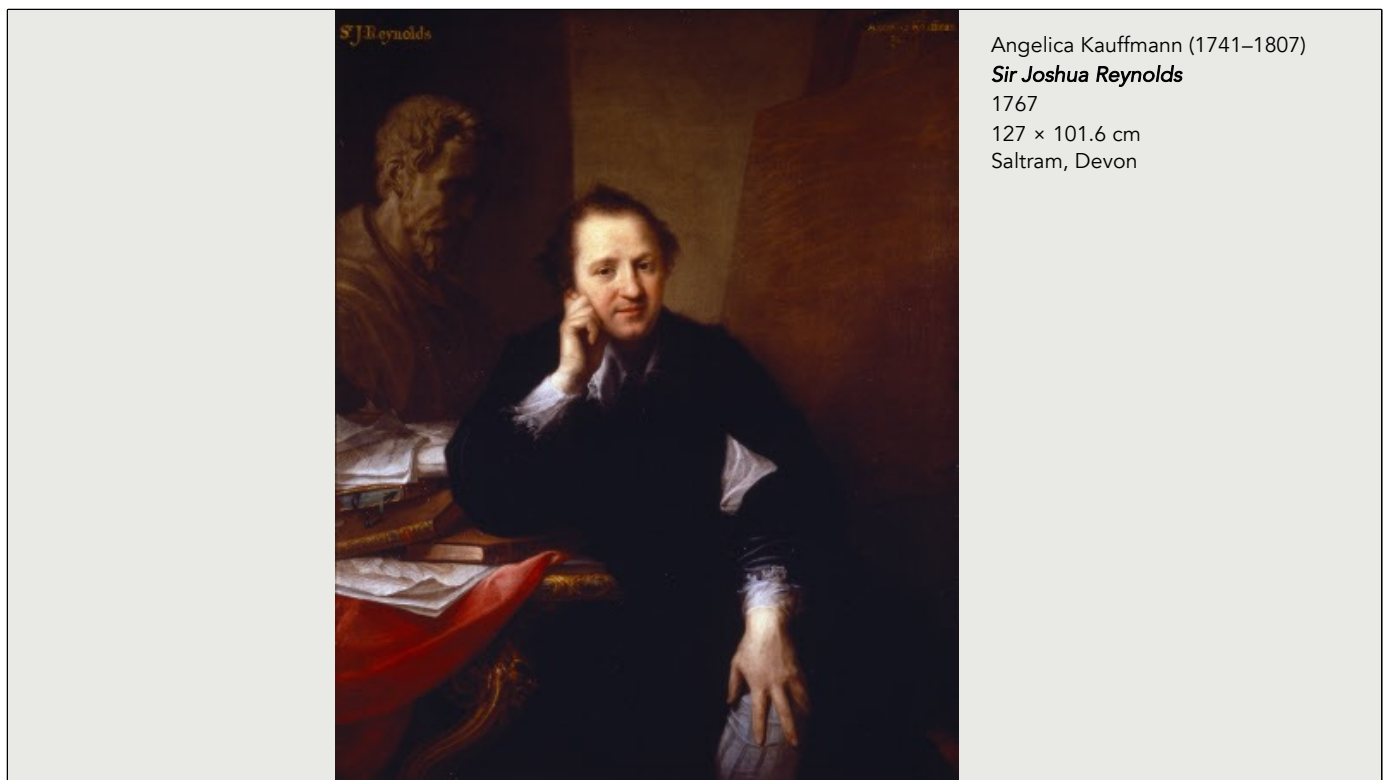
While painting Englishmen in Italy Kauffman met Lady Wentworth, the wife of the British ambassador to Venice Joseph Smith, and she invited Kauffman to London (in 1765-6). Lady Wentworth opened high society to her and she was well received by everyone including the royal family. One of her earliest portraits in London was of David Garrick (1717-1779), the well-known actor, playwright and theatre manager. Kaufman's business acumen is shown in the way she arranged for her portrait of such a well-known figure to be publicly exhibited at the Free Society of Artists the previous year to demonstrate her talent.

The pose is from a portrait by Frans Hals of his friend.

Kauffman was described by everyone as gentle and considerate but she had a laser-like ability to make money from her art.

Notes

Lady Bridget Wentworth Murray



Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807), Sir Joshua Reynolds, 1767, 127 × 101.6 cm, Saltram, Devon

Coming out of her arrival in London's cultural circles, no friendship proved more consequential than her bond with **Sir Joshua Reynolds**. He called her "Miss Angel," and his network embedded her directly in the city's art world, leading within three years to her becoming one of only two women among the founding members of the **Royal Academy in 1768**. Her portrait of Reynolds shows precisely how she understood that world. He wears **Van Dyck costume**, fashionable under **George III**, and sits beside a table carrying books by his closest intellectual companions — **Samuel Johnson**, **Oliver Goldsmith**, and **Edmund Burke**. Behind him stands a bust of **Michelangelo**, whom Reynolds openly revered. Biography and cultural positioning are inseparable here; the painting is a statement about Reynolds's identity as much as his likeness. The work was acquired by John Parker, later Lord Boringdon, who inherited **Saltram Park** in Devon and went on to collect many more of her paintings — which is why Saltram holds one of the largest concentrations of her work today. Her personal life brought one serious crisis. In 1767 she was deceived into marrying a man posing as Count Frederick de Horn, who was

already married. Her father paid him off, he fled, and — remarkably — her reputation survived entirely intact.

Notes

Of all the famous figures she met in London her firmest friend became Sir Joshua Reynolds who called her 'Miss Angel' and it was his contacts that placed her firmly inside the London art world which resulted within three years of her becoming one of only two women artists founders of the Royal Academy.

In this portrait she presents Reynolds as a man of style and culture. He wears a Van Dyck costume which was fashionable during the reign of George III and he sits beside a table strewn with papers and philosophical books, behind which is a bust of Michelangelo, an artist revered by Reynolds. The books are by his friends and include Samuels Johnson's Idler essays, Oliver Goldsmith's The Traveller, and Edmund Burke's A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful. This painting was one of her early critical successes in England.

It was acquired by Reynolds friend John Parker, later Lord Boringdon, who inherited Saltram Park in Devon. He later acquired many more works by Kauffman which is why one of the largest collections of her work is now found at that National Trust property.

Marriage. But there is one important and potentially disastrous personal episode to mention at this point. In 1767 she met Count Frederick de Horn who was staying at Claridge's. She was bowled over by the Count and they quickly married only for Kaufman to find out that she had been fooled by an impostor and fraud. The so-called 'Count' was actually a servant in disguise who had tricked her into marriage in order to stay in the country. The marriage was actually illegal as he was already married and as soon as her father had paid him off he fled the country. Surprisingly the scandal did no harm to her relationship with her patrons including the royal family and it left her as neither spinster nor virgin nor widow or wife a status that kept potential suitors at bay for another fourteen years when at forty she married Antonio Zucchi a painter and old friend of her father.

Notes

"Kauffman encountered challenges of her own; in 1767, she was tricked into

marriage by a bigamous fake count, a scandal that could easily have scuppered her career." 1

References

<https://www.apollo-magazine.com/angelica-kauffman-history-painting/>



Nathaniel Hone the Elder (1718–1784)
The Pictorial Conjurer, Displaying the Whole Art of Optical Deception
 1775
 145 × 173 cm
 National Gallery of Ireland

Nathaniel Hone the Elder (1718–1784), *The Pictorial Conjurer, Displaying the Whole Art of Optical Deception*, 1775, 145 × 173 cm, National Gallery of Ireland

Nathaniel Hone's painting **The Pictorial Conjurer, Displaying the Whole Art of Optical Deception** triggered one of the greatest art scandals of the British eighteenth century when it was submitted to the **Royal Academy** in **1775**. Hone, a successful fashionable portrait painter, constructed the work as a direct attack on **Joshua Reynolds**, President of the Academy. The conjuror figure, modelled by a man Reynolds frequently employed, summons a cascade of **Old Master** prints with his long cane — prints traceable to specific paintings Reynolds had exhibited in the preceding two years, drawn from **Michelangelo**, **Carlo Maratta**, and **Francesco Romanelli**. An open book in the scene reads "advantageous copies from various masters," and a demon at the top casts the prints into flames. Reynolds had declared only months earlier in his **Discourses on Art** that no man need be ashamed of copying the ancients. The official reason given for demanding the painting's removal was a nude caricature of **Angelica Kauffman** in the background, which Hone later denied under affidavit. Furious at the censure, he withdrew from the

Academy entirely and organised an independent exhibition — the first one-man show ever held in the British Isles.

Notes

Just to jump ahead eight years. Kaufman's relationship with Joshua Reynolds set tongues wagging and their relationship was lampooned in this painting by Nathaniel Hone (pronounced 'hone' as in sharpening a blade). It created one of the greatest art scandals of the British eighteenth century.

Hone had a successful career as a fashionable portrait painter and subject painter. This painting whose full title is *The Pictorial Conjuror, Displaying the Whole Art of Optical Deception* caused an outcry when it was submitted for exhibition at the Royal Academy, London, in 1775.

The reason given was that it included a nude caricature of Angelica Kauffman. This was subsequently painted over, but the original figure can still be seen in a sketch in Tate Britain (CLICK).

The true cause of offence, however, was that the picture was seen as an attack on Kauffman's friend Joshua Reynolds, President of the Royal Academy. His practice of borrowing poses from Old Master paintings to ennoble his portraits was seen by Hone as plagiarism.

The model used for the figure of the conjuror was often employed by Reynolds. With his long cane the conjuror summons up an abundance of Old Master prints, while in his hand is a print of Raphael's 'Diadem Madonna'. The subject, 'Truth is revealed to Man', is a pointed reference to Reynolds's artistic practice.

In the sketch in the background is a group of cavorting nudes holding paintbrushes and palettes. The conjuror is intended to be Reynolds and the young girl leaning on his knee is Kauffman. However, what incensed her was the naked woman in the background wearing black stockings. This was a reference to a project by Kauffman and Reynolds to decorate St Paul's cathedral.

After a brief showing at the Academy, it was requested that the painting be removed. Hone was furious, and promptly withdrew from the Royal Academy. Without delay he organised an independent display of his work, the first one-man show ever held in the British Isles." (National Gallery of Ireland: Essential Guide, 2008)

Notes

Hone later signed an affidavit swearing he never introduced a figure reflecting on mes Angelica Kauffman. It has been suggested instead that it is an all out attack on Reynolds open and recommended practice of borrowing from the Old Masters. The open books title is "ADVANTAG/EOUSCOPIES/FROM VARIOU./MAS..." and his wand points towards an open fire. All the Old Master prints are being cast into the flames by a demon at the top. The prints relate to paintings exhibited by Reynolds over the previous two years, Michelangelo's Aminadab, the basis for Reynolds's Count Ugolino and his Children, displayed in 1773; an etching after Carlo Maratta's Infant Christ, used for his Infant Jupiter, exhibited in 1774; Francesco Romanelli's The Slumbering Silenus, the model for Reynolds's portrait of the Three Ladies Adorning a Term of Hymen displayed the previous year. The previous December Reynold's asserted during his famous Discourses on Art "no man need be ashamed of copying the ancients".

The conjuror was modelled by a model that Reynolds frequently used.

The six pointed double-triangle star was associated in the eighteenth century with magic and only later did it become the Star of David.

References

<https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/article/mary-moser-and-angelica-kauffman>
(see letter from Kaufmann)

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/hone-sketch-for-the-conjuror-t00938>

<https://chronicle250.com/1775>



Francesco Romanelli (1610-1662)
*Slumbering Silenus Tied up with
Tendrils*
1632-33

Francesco Romanelli (1610-1662), *Slumbering Silenus Tied up with Tendrils*, 1632-33

Reynolds's elevation of portraiture to the rank of history painting reshaped British art in the eighteenth century. The **French Royal Academy** had established a strict hierarchy of genres in the seventeenth century, placing history painting — scenes drawn from mythology, scripture, and ancient history — above portraiture, landscape, and still life. The style deemed appropriate for history painting was classical and idealised, collectively termed the **grand manner** or **grand style**, and the resulting body of work was known as **High Art**. **Sir Joshua Reynolds** gave the grand manner its most influential theoretical formulation in his **Discourses on Art**, fifteen lectures delivered to Royal Academy students between **1769 and 1790**. Reynolds argued that painters must reject slavish copying of nature and instead pursue a generalised, ideal form — one that, in his words from the **Fourth Discourse**, gives "what is called the grand style to invention, to composition, to expression, and even to colouring and drapery." In practice, this meant absorbing the example of ancient Greek and Roman sculpture alongside Italian Renaissance painters, above all **Raphael**. Reynolds then applied this

framework directly to portraiture. His **Three Ladies Adorning a Term of Hymen**, painted in **1774**, shows three sisters posed in a mythological scene — biography and allegory fused within a single grand-manner composition.

Notes

Here is one example. "They [the prints] include, just below the group of naked figures, an engraving after the *Slumbering Silenus Tied up with Tendrils* by Francesco Romanelli (1610-62), which Reynolds had used as a source for his group portrait, *Three Ladies Adorning a Term of Hymen* (Tate N00079) of 1774." (Tate)

Elevated portraits to history painting

The term 'history painting' was introduced by the French Royal Academy in the seventeenth century. It was seen as the most important type (or 'genre'), of painting above portraiture, the depiction of scenes from daily life (called genre painting), landscape and still life painting. (See the glossary page for genres to find out more).

The style considered appropriate to use for history painting was classical and idealised – known as the 'grand style' – and the result was known overall as High Art.

Grand manner is an English term used widely from the eighteenth century to describe what was considered to be the highest style of art in academic theory – a style based on an idealised, classical approach

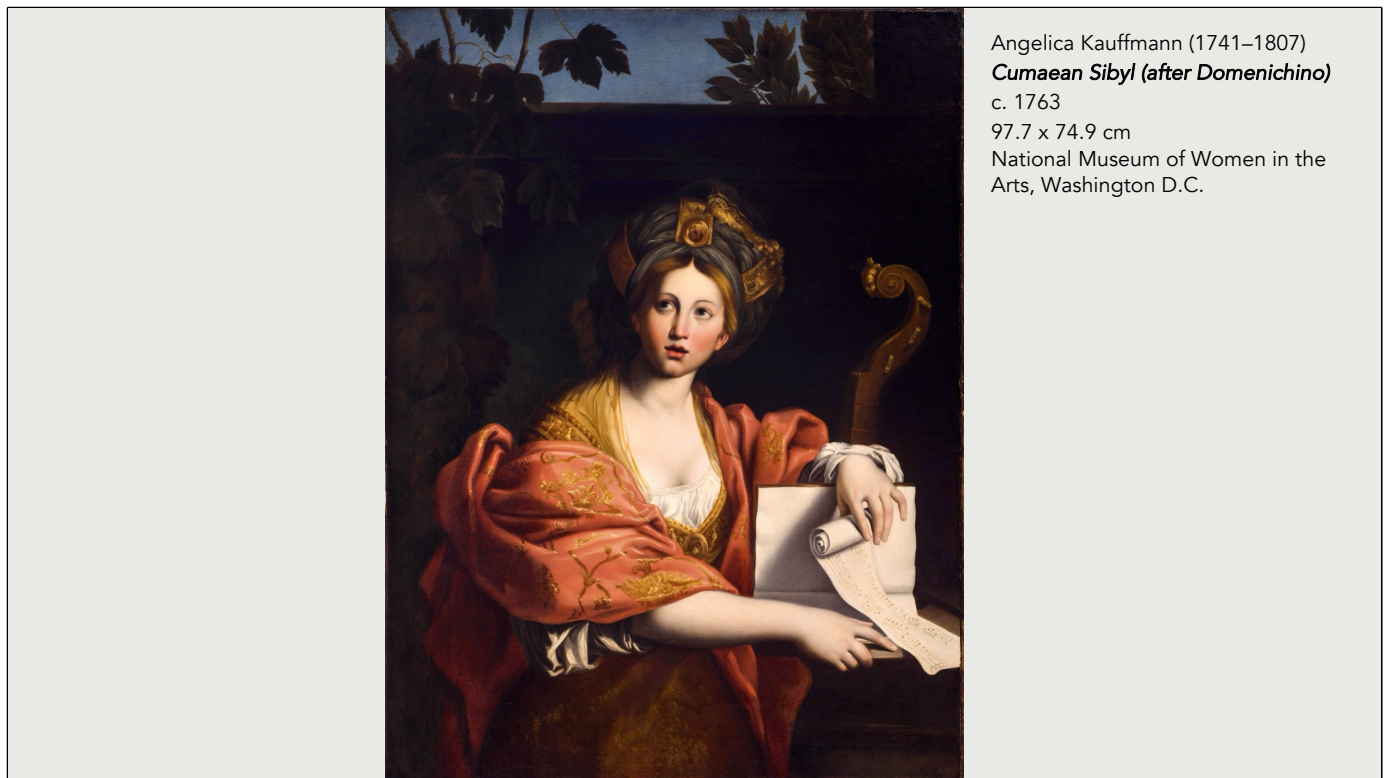
The term grand manner was given currency by Sir Joshua Reynolds and extensively discussed in his *Discourses on Art* – fifteen lectures delivered to students at Royal Academy between 1769 and 1790. Reynolds argued that painters should not slavishly copy nature but seek a generalised and ideal form. This 'gives what is called the grand style to invention, to composition, to expression, and even to colouring and drapery' (Fourth Discourse). In practice it meant drawing on the style of ancient Greek and Roman (classical) art and the Italian Renaissance masters such as Raphael.

Grand manner was strictly used for history painting, but Reynolds adapted it very successfully to portraiture, inventing the high-art portrait.

Notes

The women are, left to right, Barbara (preparing for marriage), Elizabeth (engaged) and Ann (married). Daughters of a rich landowner with an estate in Ireland and who lived in Scotland. The painting was commissioned by the

fiancé of Elizabeth.



Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807), Cumaeen Sibyl (after Domenichino), c. 1763, 97.7 x 74.9 cm, National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington D.C.

Angelica Kauffman copied this image from **Domenichino's** *Cumaeen Sibyl*, the original of which hangs in the **Galleria Borghese** in Rome. The Cumaeen Sibyl was the most celebrated prophetess of the ancient world, associated with a Greek colony near Naples, and her cultural reach extended far beyond antiquity. **Raphael** painted her, **Michelangelo** placed her on the **Sistine Chapel** ceiling, and medieval theologians held that she had foretold the birth of Christ, giving her a continuous authority across more than a thousand years of European thought. Kauffman's copy is therefore an act of serious scholarly engagement, not mere exercise. By working directly from Domenichino, she absorbed the compositional logic of a painter whose reputation stood very high in the **eighteenth century**, particularly among those who valued the classical tradition she herself championed. The figure holds a **viola da gamba** and rests beside an open music book, and the iconography is deliberate: ancient tradition held that sibyls delivered their prophecies in song, accompanied by instruments. Prophecy here becomes performance, and the

musical attributes remind the viewer that divine revelation, in the classical imagination, was inseparable from art.

Notes

This is an early copy by Kauffman of a work by Domenichino now in the Gallery Borghese. The Cumaean Sibyl or prophetess was the most famous sibyl in ancient Rome as she is alleged to have lived in a Greek colony near Naples. She was painted by Raphael and on the Sistine Chapel by Michelangelo. In the Middle Ages she was considered to have prophesied the birth of Christ. The figure is depicted with a viola da gamba and a music book, because traditionally in antiquity sibyls sang their prophecies to the accompaniment of musical instruments.

References

<https://galleriaborghese.beniculturali.it/en/opere/sibyl-2/>

Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807)
Penelope at Her Loom
1764
169 × 118 cm
Brighton and Hove Museums and Art
Galleries



Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807), *Penelope at Her Loom*, 1764, 169 × 118 cm, Brighton and Hove Museums and Art Galleries

Angelica Kauffman painted this work in 1764, drawing on a subject from **Homer's *Odyssey*** that had rarely appeared in paint before. Kauffman faced institutional barriers that prevented women from studying the male nude, so she deliberately sought out female-centred narratives from ancient literature, giving herself both a compositional freedom and a distinctive subject matter. **Penelope** was the wife of **Odysseus**, who had left to fight the Trojan War and was absent for twenty years. Besieged by suitors who assumed her husband dead, she promised she would remarry only once she had woven a funeral shroud for Laertes, her father-in-law. Each night she unpicked the day's work, ensuring the cloth was never finished. Kauffman renders her grief directly: tears are visible, and beside her sits **Argos**, Odysseus's aged dog, who had been young when his master sailed. The **bow** leaning in the composition is Odysseus's alone — so powerful that only he can string it. He eventually returns in disguise, strings the bow to prove his identity, and uses it to kill the suitors. Every object in this painting is quietly loaded with that coming reckoning.

Notes

This is Penelope at Her Loom. Kauffman did paint men but she also circumvented restrictions on women studying the male nude by producing female-centred compositions, often on subjects from ancient literary sources such as the Odyssey that had seldom (if ever) been painted before, as with Penelope at Her Loom (1764).

Penelope was the mythical wife of Odysseus who had left to fight the Trojan War. She waited patiently for twenty years for him to return and after several years most assumed he was dead and suitors appeared who wanted to marry her. To keep the suitors at bay she claimed she could not marry until she had completed weaving a shroud for the future funeral of his father Laertes. Each night she would carefully unravel the work she had done the that day so she never finished the shroud and so could never marry.

She is waiting sadly and you can see tears in her eyes. Odysseus's dog Argos is also sad. He was young when Odysseus left and when he finally returns the dog is weak and old but recognises him immediately despite Odysseus wearing a disguise.

The bow also belongs to Odysseus and it is so powerful that only he can bend it to string it. He return in disguise to test Penelope's faithfulness and then to prove his identity he strings the bow. He then uses the bow to slay Penelope's suitors.



Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807)
Hector taking leave of Andromache
1768
157.5 × 201 cm
Saltram, Devon

Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807), *Hector taking leave of Andromache*, 1768, 157.5 × 201 cm, Saltram, Devon

Angelica Kauffman submitted this work, **Hector Taking Leave of Andromache**, to the newly founded **Royal Academy** in **1769**, one of four history paintings she presented — a genre dominated almost entirely by men. The scene draws from the **Trojan War**. Paris, a prince of Troy, had taken Helen from her husband, the king of Sparta, and the Greeks launched a decade-long siege in response. **Hector**, Troy's greatest warrior and Paris's brother, is shown here saying farewell to his wife **Andromache** and their children before returning to battle. We know, and Kauffman expects her audience to know, that he will not return. **Achilles**, the Greeks' supreme fighter, will kill him. Andromache was celebrated in antiquity for her fidelity and virtue, and she became the defining figure for women's suffering in war — an emotionally rich subject that Kauffman handles with disciplined, monumental restraint. Achilles himself is later killed by Paris, who shoots him in the ankle — his single point of vulnerability. His mother **Thetis** had made him invulnerable by dipping him in the **River Styx**, holding him by the ankle alone. That origin gives us the phrase **Achilles heel**, meaning one's singular and fatal weakness.

Notes

Kauffman painted history paintings with men. This is one of the four history paintings she submitted to the just founded Royal Academy.

Let me first explain what is going on and then the significance of the painting.

It is called Hector taking leave of Andromache (pronounced 'an-dro-muh-kee'). Andromache was the wife of Hector and became famous for her fidelity and virtue and she came to represent the suffering of women. In Greek myth the Greeks waged war on Troy after Paris, a Prince of Troy, absconded with Helen, the wife of the king of Sparta. Hector was also a Prince of Troy and happily married to Andromache with children. He was their greatest warrior and had killed many Greek warriors. Here he is saying goodbye to Andromache and his children, we know for the last time as he will be killed by the greatest Greek warrior Achilles. Achilles was later killed by Paris who shot him in the ankle with an arrow. Achilles was invulnerable except for his ankle as his mother held him by the ankle when she dipped him in the River Styx as a baby. Thus we have the term 'Achilles heel', the one weak point.



Richard Samuel (–1786)
*Portraits in the Characters of the
 Muses in the Temple of Apollo*
 1778
 132.1 × 154.9 cm
 National Portrait Gallery, London

Richard Samuel (–1786), *Portraits in the Characters of the Muses in the Temple of Apollo*, 1778, 132.1 × 154.9 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London

The **Bluestocking** movement emerged in mid-18th-century Britain as a remarkable network of intellectually ambitious women who hosted mixed-gender conversation gatherings. The name originated not from the women themselves but from the botanist **Benjamin Stillingfleet**, who arrived at one such gathering wearing everyday worsted blue stockings, having no formal attire to his name. This painting depicts nine of those women, dressed in fashionable classical robes beneath a statue of Apollo, presented as a modern pantheon of arts and letters. **Elizabeth Montagu**, literary critic and Bluestocking hostess, leads the group on the right, surrounded by what **Horace Walpole** wryly called petticotries. At the centre, **Elizabeth Sheridan** holds a lyre, her identity as a professional singer made explicit. **Angelica Kauffmann** sits at her easel, palette in hand, positioned squarely within the circle she helped define socially and artistically. What distinguishes this gathering, as the National Portrait Gallery notes, is that nearly all of these women earned their living through their work. The classicist **Elizabeth Carter**, historian **Catharine Macaulay**, abolitionist playwright **Hannah More**, and

Scottish novelist **Charlotte Lennox** were not patrons of culture but its producers. Kauffmann belonged here entirely on her own terms.

Notes

I have said how difficult a career was for women but I don't want to give the impression that all women were excluded from intellectual careers. There were the blue-stockings. These were a group of women who in the mid-18th century held conversations to which they invited men.

Interestingly the term 'blue stockings' comes not from the stockings worn by the women but from those of one of the men they invited. He was the botanist Benjamin Stillingfleet and he declined to come as he did not own the appropriate clothing. He was told to come in his everyday worsted blue stockings which he did. The name Bluestocking or actually Bas Bleu (pronounced 'ba-bler') became the nickname for the group.

(CLICK) There were actually rival groups and this one was led by Elizabeth Montague on the right. She is surrounded by worthies or what Horace Walpole called 'petticoateries'.

On the left are the classicist Elizabeth Carter and the poet Anna Barbauld standing behind our Angelica Kauffman. In the centre is Elizabeth Sheridan the singer and sitting on the right the historian Catharine Macaulay and Elizabeth Griffith the dramatist, fiction writer and actress. Behind them are the playwright and anti-slavery campaigner Hannah More and Charlotte Lennox, the Scottish novelist, playwright and poet

Notes

"Nine contemporary creative women are depicted dressed in fashionable classical-style robes beneath a monumental statue of the god, and presented as members of a modern pantheon of arts and letters. This network of writers, scholars, artists and performers, are unusual as all of them – except for Elizabeth Montagu, literary critic and Blue-stocking hostess – earned a living from their work. The singer Elizabeth Ann Sheridan is in the centre, holding a lyre. The artist Angelica Kauffmann sits at an easel painting a work we cannot see, her palette in hand. Other women include the historian Catharine Macaulay, the playwright and anti-slavery campaigner Hannah More and the classicist Elizabeth Carter." ¹

On the far right is Elizabeth Griffith dramatist, fiction writer and actress and standing behind Kauffman is Anna Barbauld, the poet. And finally, standing at

the far right at the back is Charlotte Lennox, the Scottish novelist, playwright and poet. These are the feminists of their time and Kauffmann was right in the centre of the 'Bluestocking' movement.

References

https://www.npg.org.uk/assets/migrated_assets/docs/learning/digital/InFocus_AngelicaKauffmann.pdf



The Exhibition of the Royal Academy at Somerset House, 1787.

THE ART JOURNAL.

Anonymous
**The Exhibition of the Royal Academy
 1787**
 1787
 Engraving

Anonymous, The Exhibition of the Royal Academy 1787, 1787

The **Summer Exhibition at Somerset House** was the most competitive arena in British art, and that competition made entry brutal — especially for women. Johann Zoffany's engraving of the **Great Room in 1787** shows paintings hung frame to frame from dado rail to cornice, with the **Prince of Wales** standing beside **Joshua Reynolds**, ear trumpet in hand. The coveted position was "**on the line**", bottom edge eight feet from the floor, reserved for swagger portraits and history paintings. Paintings hung too high were dismissed as "**skied**", effectively invisible. The Hanging Committee was a battleground, and Academicians fought hard to secure prominent placement. The exhibition, running continuously since **1769**, remains the world's oldest open-submission show. Angelica Kauffman sent works most years even after leaving England for Italy in 1780, though she submitted nothing in the year this engraving was made. The most prominent canvases on the wall that year belonged to **John Opie** and **James Northcote**, both Academicians-elect, with large history paintings occupying the line. Even **Thomas Gainsborough**, a founding Academician, broke with the institution in 1784 after his royal portraits were skied — a slight no serious painter could ignore.

Notes

I also wanted to say something about the intense competition amongst men which made it even harder for women to enter the fray.

This is the Summer Exhibition of the Royal Academy where paintings were shown frame touching frame from dado rail to cornice. The Summer Exhibition was held in the great room at Somerset House which has recently been restored. The nobility gathered in a room whose walls were covered with paintings. In the centre of the room is the Prince of Wales (1762-1830, patron of the arts, the future George IV) standing next to Joshua Reynolds with his ear trumpet.

Paintings could be hung up high, which was called being skied or put in the best position just above eye level with the bottom of the picture eight foot from the ground, known as 'on the line'.

Most of the paintings were portraits as this was what most patrons wanted, a picture of themselves looking or grand or sometimes of their wives and occasionally of their favourite child. Large, imposing portraits were known as 'swagger portraits'.

There was a hanging committee and Academicians fought over who should appear 'on the line'. Academicians were guaranteed a place on the wall for a limited number of paintings and members of the public, including women, could submit works. It is in fact the world's oldest open submission exhibition and it has happened every year since 1769.

Kaufman did not exhibit in 1787 when this engraving was made. She and her father had returned to Italy in 1780 after 14 years in England but this did not stop her sending three history paintings that were exhibited the year before and two the following year. Perhaps it was that she was rebuilding her studio that year although we know she painted other pictures.

Notes

The pictures are numbered and can be identified from the R.A. Catalogue, the two largest and most conspicuous are '26', 'The assassination of David Riccio' [sometimes Rizzio] by John Opie (1761-1807, a Cornish historical and portrait painter), R.A. elect, and '154', 'Walworth killing Wat Tyler', by James Northcote (1746-1831, English painter and student of Joshua Reynolds), also R.A. elect, the latter resembling a caricature of the grand manner.

David Rizzio was Mary Queen of Scots secretary and he was stabbed 56 times

by her husband Lord Darnley and his accomplices as he was jealous of their friendship. Mary was seven months pregnant with the future James VI and Darnley suspected Rizzio.

William Walworth was Lord Mayor of London and killed Wat Tyler in Smithfield in 1381.

Summer Exhibition

The number of pictures increased each year from 547 in 1781 to 1,165 in 1821 so they had to be hung frame to frame. The position was determined by the Hanging Committee and the position of a painting was critical to it being seen. If it was too high, known as being 'skied' it could not be appreciated and the ideal position was 'on the line' with the bottom edge eight foot from the floor. This position was occupied by 'swagger' portraits and history paintings. Small pieces and pieces by lesser known artists were skied and we shall see later that Constable created his 'six footers' to be large enough to be placed on the line. Although Thomas Gainsborough was a founding member he broke with the Academy in 1784 when his portraits of the royal family were skied.



Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807)
Dr. John Morgan
1764
144.1 x 108.3 cm
National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian
Institute

Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807), Dr. John Morgan, 1764, 144.1 x 108.3 cm,
National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institute

Kauffman's international circle of professional peers brings us directly to the transatlantic connections that shaped her career. **Benjamin West**, who studied alongside Kauffman in Florence and later became President of the **Royal Academy**, exemplifies how seriously Americans pursued formal artistic training in Italy. Another American in her orbit was the physician **Dr John Morgan**, who sat for his portrait with Kauffman in **1764** while completing his medical education in Europe. Morgan returned to America the following year and founded what became the country's first medical school, later serving as director-general of the Army Hospital during the **Revolutionary War**. The encounter was not purely professional on one side. Kauffman consulted Morgan about her own declining health, and he recorded the exchange years later in his own words: "She had been labouring for some time under an indisposition for which she was pleased to take my advice. The seat of her disorder was in her stomach and proceeded from indigestion. I believe it arose from her sedentary life and close application to painting." The diagnosis points directly to the sheer scale of her output — roughly **800 oil**

paintings, 400 drawings, 13 frescos, and 41 etchings — sustained at considerable personal cost to her constitution.

Notes

One of Kauffman's fellow students in Florence was the American Benjamin West, who later became President of the Royal Academy. Unlike the British, Americans visited Italy for serious professional reasons. Another American who sat for Kauffman in 1764 was Dr. John Morgan (1735-1789) who was there to continue his medical training. When he returned to America the following year he played a key role in establishing America's first medical school and during the Revolutionary War (1775-1783, also called the American Revolution) he was director-general of the Hospital of the Army.

Kauffman's produced some 800 oil paintings on canvas or copper, 13 frescos, 400 drawings, a small number of early pastels, and 41 etchings. She worked extremely hard and on this occasion asked for medical advice from Dr Morgan. He wrote about many years later "She had been labouring for some time under an indisposition for which she was pleased to take my advice. The seat of her disorder was in her stomach and proceeded from indigestion. I believe it arose from her sedentary life and close application to painting." So we know the hard work was effecting her health and she remained of a delicate disposition but continued to work hard.



Henry Fuseli (1741-1825)
*The Artist Moved to Despair by the
Grandeur of Antique Fragments*
1778-1779
red chalk on sepia wash
Kunsthaus, Zurich

Henry Fuseli (1741-1825), *The Artist Moved to Despair by the Grandeur of Antique Fragments*, 1778-1779, Kunsthaus, Zurich

Before we look at specific works, two defining terms underpin almost everything in this period: **NeoClassicism** and **Romanticism**. NeoClassicism emerged around **1750** as a direct reaction against the decorative excess of the Rococo. Drawing on ancient Greece and Rome, it prized order, harmony, balance, and rational idealisation — values that aligned closely with the **Age of Enlightenment**, which placed reason above superstition and science above blind faith. **Sir Joshua Reynolds**, **Benjamin West**, and **Angelica Kauffman** all worked within this tradition. Romanticism developed between roughly **1780 and 1830**, pushing back against NeoClassical rationalism by privileging emotion, imagination, and nature. It drew inspiration from the medieval and the oriental, and rejected the strict academic hierarchy that placed history painting above all other genres. **William Blake**, **J. M. W. Turner**, and **John Constable** are its central figures — and Constable himself singled out Angelica Kauffman by name, arguing her influence held back the progress of the English School. The boundary between the two movements is rarely clean. **Henry Fuseli's** *The Nightmare* of **1781** demonstrates this perfectly:

trained in the classical tradition, Fuseli consistently reached toward Romantic themes of the irrational and the psychological. Later Romanticism extended further still, into the Pre-Raphaelites and the Symbolists.

Notes

Let me take another detour into art historical terms—NeoClassical versus Romantic.

Neoclassicism developed as a reaction against the Rococo and developed about 1750. It was inspired by the classical period of ancient Greece and Rome. Neoclassical literally means 'new, of the highest rank'. It was motivated by objectivity, reason and the intellect. It embodies the ideals of the eighteenth-century Age of Enlightenment (1685-1815) sometimes called the Age of Reason which emphasised reason over superstition and science over blind faith. It is typified by order, calm, harmony, balance, idealisation, and rationality.

Romanticism developed between 1780 and 1830 but was influential long after that. It developed as a reaction against the neoclassical and stresses human creativity, nature and emotions and feelings. It values emotion and the imagination and is influenced by the medieval and the oriental.

So which is which here? The one on the left shows feeling but the predominate image is of a classical statue or part of what was a gigantic classical statue, so it is NeoClassical. The one on the right is a clear case of Romanticism. It is *The Haywain* by John Constable. In fact, John Constable specifically named Angelica Kauffman as the reason the English School would not be able to make progress until her influence had diminished.

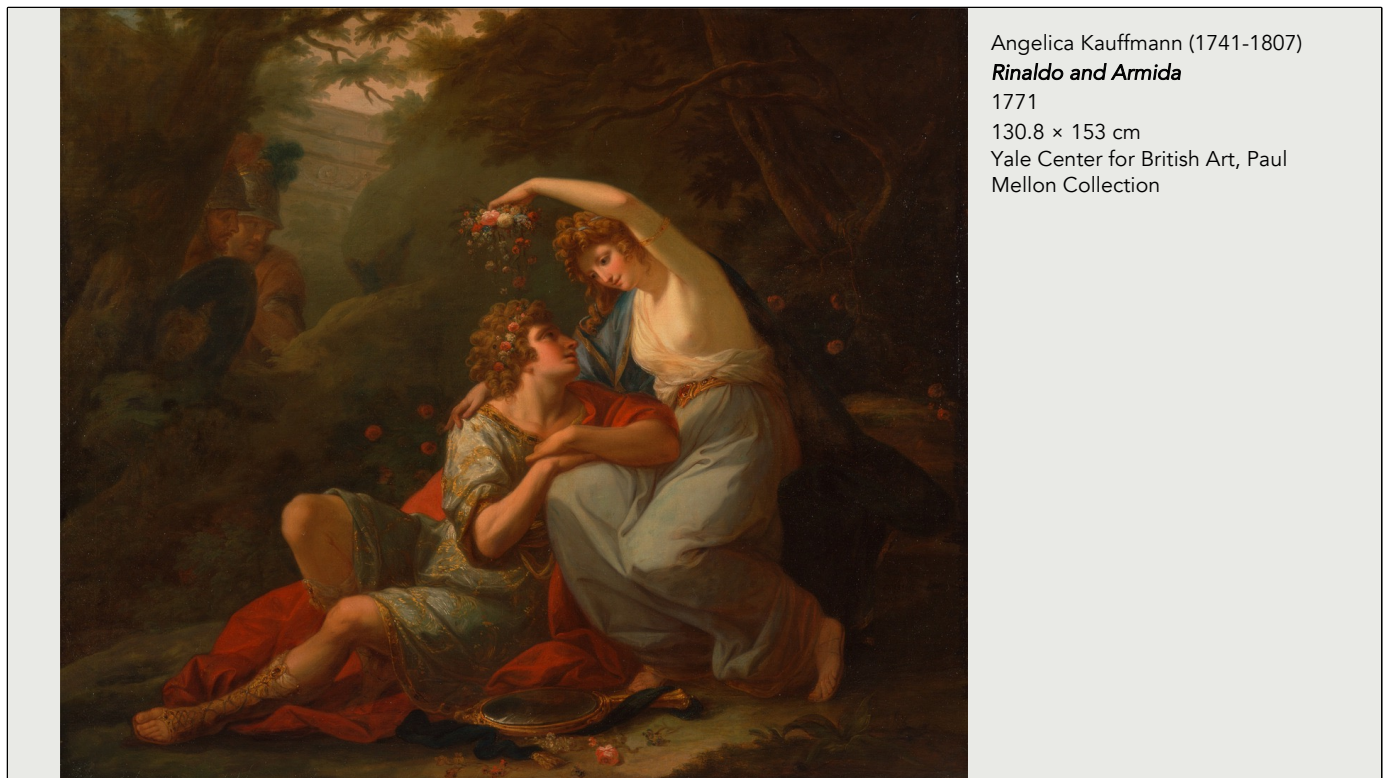
I have given you very clear cut cases here but it is often not so clear. There is a lot of crossover, for example, Henry Fuseli, 1781, *The Nightmare*, was a classical artist whose themes often anticipated the Romantic.

(One author who explored the differences was Jane Austin in *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) written as NeoClassicism was giving way to Romanticism. Sense is the rational, prudent NeoClassicism of Elinor Dashwood and sensibility the emotional, feeling Romantic sympathy of Marianne Dashwood. The novel keeps these two conflicting approaches in balance favouring neither one nor the other.)

Neoclassical artists followed the strict hierarchy of painting and so valued the history painting as the highest form of art. Romanticism was a revolutionary

art form that rejected existing categories and valued the expression of feelings and nature.

Sir Joshua Reynolds, Benjamin West and Angelica Kauffman were NeoClassical artists. William Blake, J.M.W. Turner and John Constable were Romantic artists. Later phases of Romanticism were the Pre-Raphaelites and the Symbolists.



Angelica Kauffmann (1741-1807)
Rinaldo and Armida
1771
130.8 × 153 cm
Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection

Angelica Kauffmann (1741-1807), *Rinaldo and Armida*, 1771, 130.8 × 153 cm, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection

Armida, the Saracen sorceress from Torquato Tasso's epic poem, lures the crusader **Rinaldo** into enchanted domesticity on the island of Fortuna — and this scene shows the two of them together in that suspended idyll, war entirely forgotten. Kauffman was working within a cultural moment alert to this story: **Antonio Salieri** premiered his operetta on exactly this subject in Vienna in **1771**, the same year Kauffman produced this painting. That year proved exceptionally productive. She made a six-month trip to Ireland, painting the Anglo-Irish gentry, and simultaneously exhibited two ambitious English history paintings — **Vortigern, King of Britain, Enamoured with Rowena** and **Eleanora Sucking the Venom from the Wound of King Edward I** — both of which now hang at **Saltram House**. The **Society of Artists** had been offering a prize for British history painting since 1760, and the irony is striking: it was the Swiss-born Kauffman and the American **Benjamin West** who answered that call most decisively, not their British contemporaries. Kauffman's engagement with national histories — British, classical, and literary — was never decorative impulse; it was a calculated argument for her

place at the centre of European **history painting**.

Notes

Armida is a Saracen sorceress who lulls the crusader Rinaldo into a deep sleep intending to kill him but before she strikes the hero she falls in love and transports him in her flying chariot to her magical palace on the island of Fortuna. Here Rinaldo forgets the war and happily lives with the enchantress until his friends come to rescue him. Here we see him on the island happily playing with Armida.

In 1771 the composer Antonio Salieri (1750-1825) premiered an operetta in Vienna called *Armida* about the story of Armida and Rinaldo.

Also this year, Kauffman took a six month trip to Ireland where she painted the Irish gentry. She also exhibited two history paintings of English history—*Vortigern, King of Britain, Enamoured with Rowena at the Battle of Hengist*, the Saxon General, *Eleanora Sucking the Venom out of the Wound of her Husband, King Edward I* both now hung on the stairs at Saltram House. The Society of Artists had been offering a prize since 1760 for paintings of British history and ironically it was the Swiss Angelica Kauffman and the American Benjamin West who first exhibited such subjects.



Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807)
Woman in Turkish Dress
c. 1771-74
62.2 × 49.5 cm
Saint Louis Art Museum, Saint Louis

Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807), *Woman in Turkish Dress*, c. 1771-74, 62.2 × 49.5 cm, Saint Louis Art Museum, Saint Louis

The woman in the Turkish dress remains unidentified, but that anonymity is almost the point. Foreign attire was fashionable in 18th-century London, and **Angelica Kauffmann** painted several works featuring **Ottoman dress**, never concerned with accuracy. The clothing functioned as costume, worn to invoke an exotic atmosphere and, more troublingly, to assert a kind of cultural ownership over non-European worlds. **Edward Said** named this dynamic in his 1978 book **Orientalism**, arguing that the West actively constructed an imaginary Orient across literature, art, and music. That constructed Orient served Western psychological needs — excitement, fantasy, projected desire — and bore little relation to the actual histories and cultures it claimed to represent. Kauffmann's portrait fits squarely within this pattern. The painting likely functioned as an advertisement, inviting London women to commission their own portraits in this exotic style. That commercial logic reveals something important: **Orientalist aesthetics** were not marginal but commercially mainstream. Some readings position this as an early **Romantic** work because of its Oriental subject, but the picture's cool compositional

control marks it as the product of a committed **Neoclassical** artist who simply recognised a fashionable trend and turned it to professional advantage.

Notes

The Other

We don't know the woman in the Turkish dress but foreign attire was popular during the 18th century as it was regarded as exotic. Kauffman painted several works showing clothing worn in the Ottoman Empire. The clothing was simply appropriated that is there was no need for accuracy it was worn to invoke an exotic, foreign feel and perhaps to convey the idea of colonial ownership over all non-European cultures.

We believe it may have been painted as an advertisement to encourage the women in London to have their portrait painted in this exotic style.

This type of appropriation was described in a groundbreaking book by Edward Said called *Orientalism* in 1978. He argues that the West constructed an 'Orient' in history. Literature, art, music and popular culture that represented the Orient as the Other. The representation had little to do with the actual history and culture of the Orient but fulfilled various needs in the West such as to create an exciting, sexual, exotic world.

As this represents the Orient it could be seen as an early Romantic work but I would see it as a neoClassical artists painting a portrait of a woman wearing the latest fashion.

Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807)

Morning Amusement

1773

74 × 63 cm

The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Art, Moscow



Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807), *Morning Amusement*, 1773, 74 × 63 cm, The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Art, Moscow

Angelica Kauffman made several paintings of women in Eastern dress, deliberately evoking the private world of a Turkish harem. These works were designed for intimate domestic interiors — spaces where a lady might receive female visitors — and that relaxed, exclusively female atmosphere suited the studio of a woman artist particularly well. The cultural fascination with Ottoman life had a sharp, firsthand edge. **Lady Mary Wortley Montagu** travelled to Turkey in **1716** accompanying her husband, and her letters record the world she encountered with genuine curiosity rather than condescension. Her account of a women-only **Turkish bath** is among the most vivid: she describes some two hundred women, entirely unclothed, and notes the complete absence of the disdainful glances or satirical whispers she would have faced in British society had she deviated from fashionable dress. Montagu found herself openly admiring their bodies, and reflected that if nakedness were the fashion, the face would hardly be observed at all. That observation cuts to the heart of what made these Eastern settings so compelling for Kauffman and her patrons. The **harem** as subject licensed a

different kind of looking — attentive, unhurried, freed from the social performance that governed how women were seen, and judged, at home.

Notes

This is another example of exotic dress with a full-length figure doing embroidery. Kauffman painted a number of women in Eastern clothes intended as an imitation of the garments worn in a Turkish harem. It is believed that this created an intimate exclusively female setting appropriate to a room in which a lady might receive female visitors, a relaxed intimacy that could perhaps be more easily achieved in the studio of a woman artist.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu travelled with her husband to Turkey in 1716 and recorded the minutiae of the world she found. She was curious and open-minded and on one occasion she described a Turkish bath for women only. There were 200 women completely naked who were all charming with none of the "disdainful smiles or satirical whispers" that would be found in British society if a woman, namely herself, appeared who was not dressed in exactly the correct fashion of the day. She found herself admiring their skin and their bodies and reflected "that if it was the fashion to go naked, the face would hardly be observed".

References

https://www.swansea.ac.uk/visualanthropology/projects/004_Montagu/cornucopia.htm



Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807)
*Portrait of Lady Georgiana, Lady
Henrietta Frances and George John
Spencer, Viscount Althorp*
1774
Althorp

Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807), *Portrait of Lady Georgiana, Lady Henrietta Frances and George John Spencer, Viscount Althorp*, 1774, Althorp

Joshua Reynolds painted this triple portrait of the Spencer children sometime in the early 1760s, when **Georgiana**, **George**, and **Henrietta** were still young enough to be posed in the relaxed, informal grouping that Reynolds favoured for aristocratic childhood subjects. Georgiana, who would become the celebrated **Duchess of Devonshire**, is the eldest and most prominent figure. George, later the **2nd Earl Spencer**, and Henrietta, who would marry into the Bessborough family, complete the trio. The painting carries a notable curatorial history. For years, Henrietta was misidentified as **Lady Elizabeth Foster**, the companion and eventual second wife of the 5th Duke of Devonshire, and the canvas was wrongly attributed to **Thomas Lawrence**, who was not even born until 1769 — a full decade after the sitters were young enough to appear as children here. Correcting both errors matters: misattribution distorts how we read a work's style, and misidentification obscures the actual social network the image documents. Reynolds understood portraiture as a form of social argument. Grouping these three siblings with easy physical closeness asserts familial warmth as an aristocratic

virtue, making the **Spencer family's** bonds as legible as their rank.

Notes

A portrait of the three children of the first Earl Spencer:

Lady Georgiana Spencer (later Duchess of Devonshire) (7 June 1757 – 30 March 1806);

Lady Henrietta Spencer (later Countess of Bessborough) (16 June 1761 – 11 November 1821);

and Viscount Althorp (later 2nd Earl Spencer) (1 September 1758 – 10 November 1834).

Notes: In this image, Lady Henrietta was previously misidentified as Elizabeth Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire (Lady Elizabeth Foster), and the painting misattributed to Thomas Lawrence (1769–1830)



Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807)
*Lady Georgiana Spencer, Henrietta
Spencer and George Viscount
Althorp*
c. 1766
113.6 x 144.8 cm
Private collection

Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807), *Lady Georgiana Spencer, Henrietta Spencer and George Viscount Althorp*, c. 1766, 113.6 x 144.8 cm, Private collection

Having established Kauffman's range as a portraitist, her group works reveal an even more ambitious synthesis of modes. Among her relatively few group portraits, three begun during her **1771 Ireland trip** and completed in her London studio stand out for their formal ingenuity. In this painting, Kauffman fuses the public representational conventions she reserved for male sitters with the intimate register she brought to female portraiture. The cross-legged pose given to **John, Lord Althorp**, was by this date the archetypal stance for country gentlemen, yet Kauffman deploys it to suggest contemplation rather than authority, generating a sympathetic exchange between him and his sisters. As **Wendy Wassying Roworth** has shown, this blending of gendered pictorial modes is characteristic of Kauffman's deliberate negotiation of academic conventions. The composition gains further resonance when you consider that Kauffman had painted this same group of siblings **eight years earlier**, meaning the later work invites direct comparison — a rare opportunity to trace both the children's growth and the evolution of her pictorial thinking

across nearly a decade of practice in **Georgian Britain**.

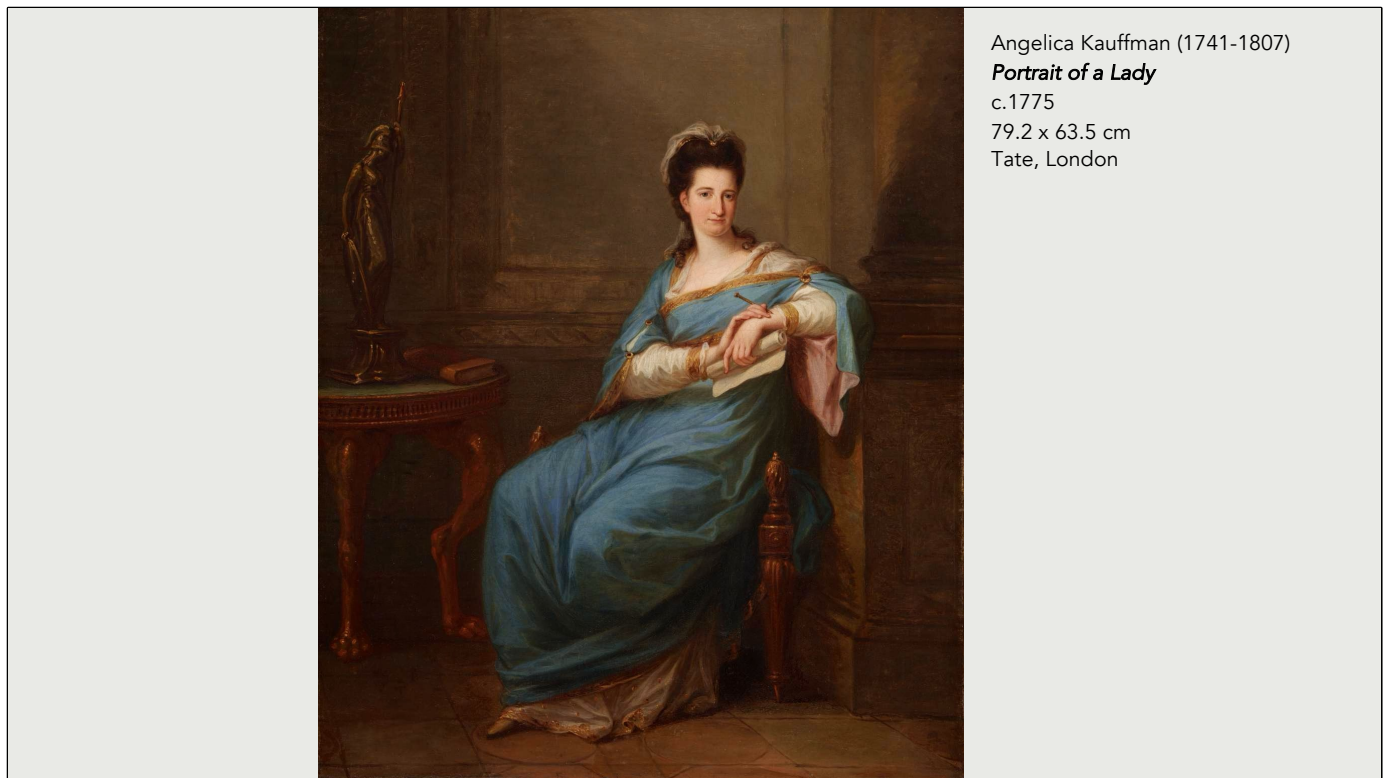
Notes

Kauffman also produced a limited number of group portraits. Three were begun on her trip to Ireland in 1771 and finished in her London studio. She fuses in one picture the form of public representation she used for portraits of men with the more intimate and private manner she used for female portraits. This is a good example, by showing John, Lord Althorp, in a contemplative mood she creates a sympathetic exchange between him and his sisters. The cross-legged pose had by this date become the archetypical one for portraits of country gentlemen ([1], p. 106).

(CLICK) Kauffman had painting this group of the same children eight years previously.

References

1. Wendy Wassyng Roworth (ed.), *Angelica Kauffman: A Continental Artist in Georgian England* (London: Reaktion Books, 1992)



Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807)
Portrait of a Lady
c.1775
79.2 x 63.5 cm
Tate, London

Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807), *Portrait of a Lady*, c.1775, 79.2 x 63.5 cm, Tate, London

Angelica Kauffmann painted this striking portrait during her years working in Britain, between **1766 and 1781**, and its identity has shifted considerably since the **Tate** acquired it in **1967**. At that point, curators believed it to be a self-portrait, but subsequent research overturned that reading, producing the deliberately open title it carries today. The sitter's identity remains unknown, though her attributes point firmly toward intellectual life. She wears classical robes and sits beside a statue of **Minerva**, goddess of wisdom — a deliberate alignment with learning and reason. A book rests on the table; writing materials are held in her hand. Taken together, these signal a woman of letters, a so-called **Bluestocking**, in eighteenth-century terms. Two names have been proposed: the historian **Catherine Macaulay** and the writer and salon host **Elizabeth Montagu**. Neither identification holds firm, because Kauffmann used these same classical accessories across many commissions. They were the visual vocabulary of learned femininity, not a coded signature for one individual. What the portrait does confirm is Kauffmann's fluency in using the conventions of **Grand Manner** portraiture to elevate female

intellectual ambition to exactly the same dignity afforded her male contemporaries.

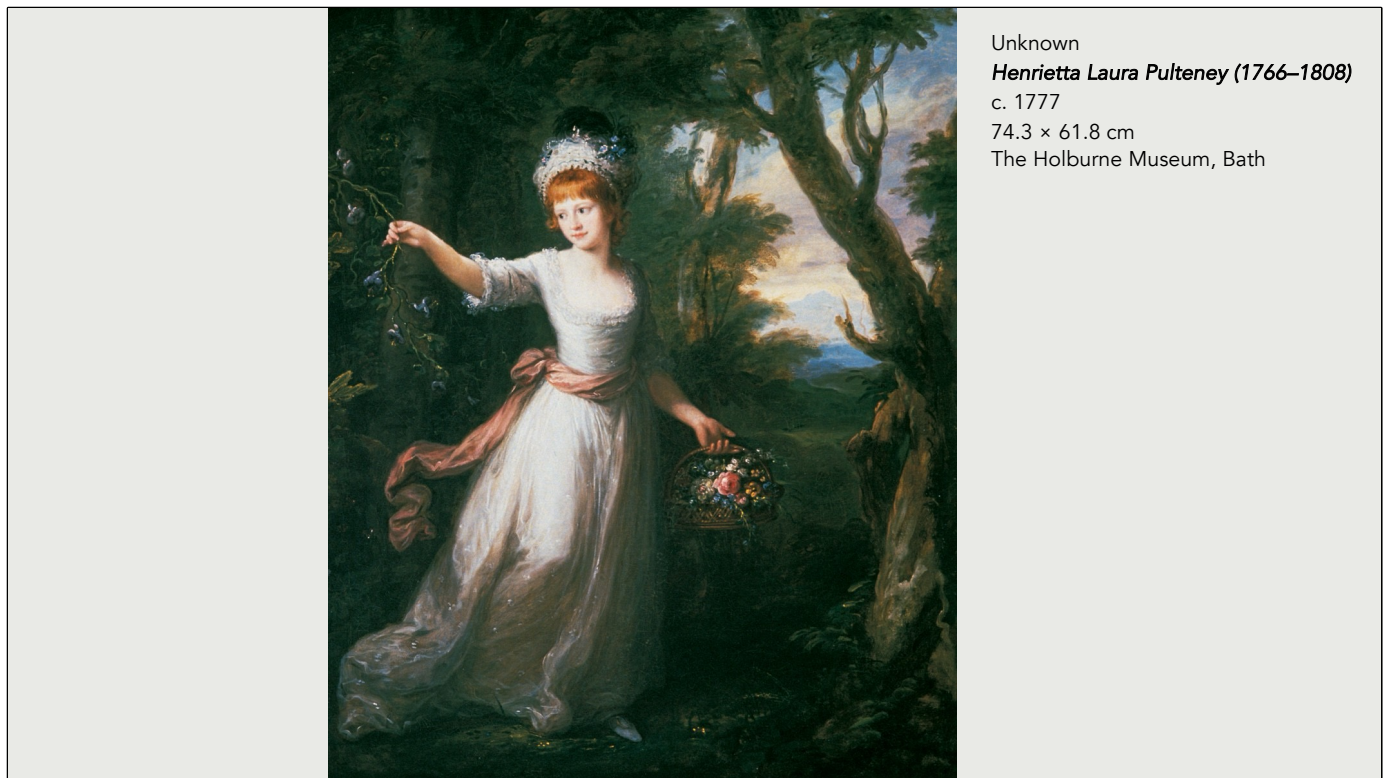
Notes

This as a well known portrait but we don't know the name of the woman. When it entered the Tate collection in 1967 it was thought to be a self-portrait but subsequent research showed it was painted in Britain (1766-81) and is not Kauffman so the current title was assumed.

We assume she is a blue stocking as she wears classical robes and sits by a statue of Minerva, the goddess of wisdom. The book upon the table and the writing materials in her hand suggest that she is a writer. Eighteenth-century female intellectuals such as the historian Catherine Macaulay (1731–1791) and the writer Elizabeth Montagu (1718–1800) have been suggested but the accessories were widely used in portraits.

References

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/kauffman-portrait-of-a-lady-t00928>



Unknown
Henrietta Laura Pulteney (1766–1808)
c. 1777
74.3 × 61.8 cm
The Holburne Museum, Bath

Unknown, Henrietta Laura Pulteney (1766–1808), c. 1777, 74.3 × 61.8 cm, The Holburne Museum, Bath

Henrietta Laura Johnstone was the only child of William Johnstone, who later became Sir William Pulteney, 5th Baronet. The family commanded extraordinary wealth, and when Henrietta was sixteen her mother, **Frances Pulteney**, died, leaving her daughter to inherit the full Pulteney estates. Before that inheritance, Henrietta had been educated at a convent in Paris until she was seventeen. Her father subsequently secured a peerage on her behalf, and she rose first to **Baroness of Bath** and then to **Countess of Bath**, titles that confirmed her position among the most prominent women of her generation. This portrait was painted when Henrietta was just **eleven years old**. It gives us a rare early image of a child whose entire future — vast landed wealth, a Paris convent education, an arranged elevation through the peerage — was already being shaped by her father's ambitions and her mother's fortune. Reading the painting against that biography, the composed, almost adult bearing the artist gives her reads less as childhood innocence and more as a deliberate statement of dynastic expectation, presenting this young girl as an heir rather than simply a child.

Notes

Henrietta Laura Johnstone was the only child of William Johnstone (1729-1805), later Sir William Pulteney, 5th Baronet. The family was extremely wealthy and when she was 16 her mother, Frances Pulteney, died and she inherited her mother's estates. She was educated in a convent in Paris until she was 17. Her father procured a peerage for her and she became Baroness of Bath and later Countess of Bath.

This is a portrait of her when she was eleven.



Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807)
***Zeuxis Selecting Models for His
Painting of Helen of Troy***

c. 1778

Annmary Brown Memorial Library,
Brown University, Rhode Island

Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807), *Zeuxis Selecting Models for His Painting of Helen of Troy*, c. 1778, Annmary Brown Memorial Library, Brown University, Rhode Island

Having established the broader context of ancient Greek aesthetics, we turn now to one of its most revealing legends. **Zeuxis**, working in the **5th century BC**, was commissioned to paint **Helen of Troy**. Rather than paint from a single model, he selected the five most beautiful women of **Croton** and took the finest feature from each. The method exposes a tension at the heart of **Platonic idealism**: that perfect beauty exists as an abstract ideal beyond physical reality, unreachable in any single human form. The process is also, bluntly, reductive — dismembering real women into aesthetic components. No works by Zeuxis survive, yet ancient written sources consistently praise his **trompe-l'œil realism**. Two anecdotes define his reputation. Birds reportedly flew down to peck at his painted grapes. In a contest with his rival **Parrhasius**, Zeuxis asked him to draw back the curtain concealing his canvas, then realised the curtain itself was the painting. Parrhasius had deceived a man; Zeuxis had only deceived birds. A final story grounds his legend in irony: commissioned to paint **Aphrodite** by an elderly woman who insisted on

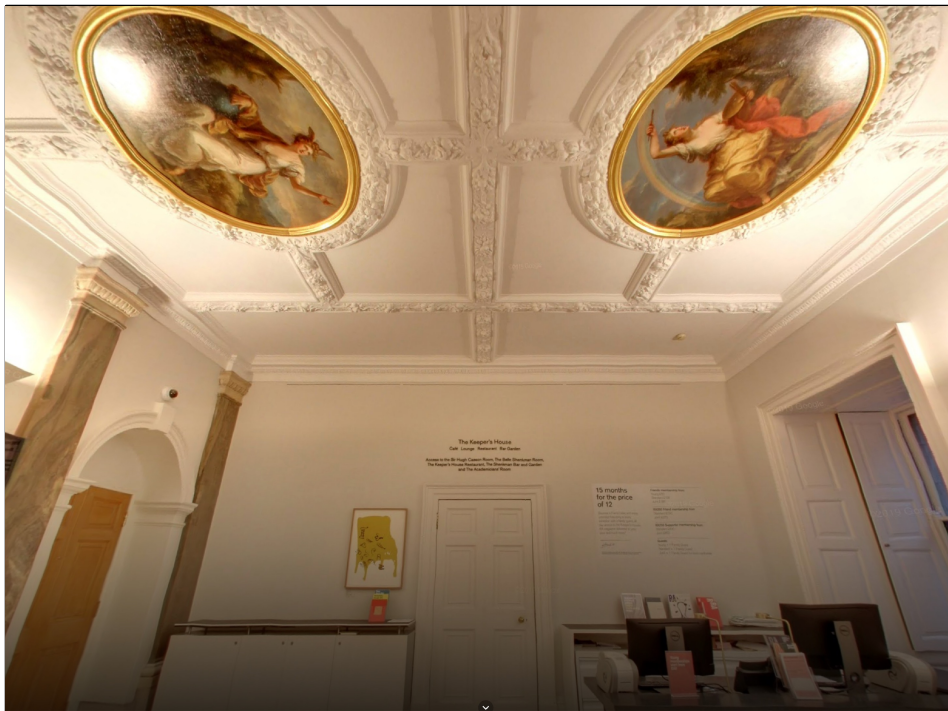
modelling herself, Zeuxis found the result so comically incongruous that he laughed himself to death.

Notes

The story from ancient Greece was that the artist Zeuxis (5th century BC) was asked to paint Helen of Troy, the most beautiful woman in the world. Zeuxis chose the five most beautiful women of Croton and then selected the most beautiful part from each woman. This deconstruction of beauty into components is both demeaning to the women and women in general but it also draws attention to the Platonic ideal of beauty which was believed to be an ideal that stood outside the world of mere reality and so could only be reached imperfectly in this world.

No paintings by Zeuxis survive but written records claim he was renowned for his realism. He is also believed to have introduced still life into painting. One story is that when he unveiled a painting of grapes the birds flew down to peck them. Another story is that he entered a competition with a rival Parrhasius. When Parrhasius asked Zeuxis to pull back the curtain to reveal his painting he suddenly realised the curtain was painted.

Zeuxis was commissioned by an old woman to paint Aphrodite but she insisted on modelling for the goddess. Zeuxis was so amused by the humorous way he painted her that he died laughing.



Angelica Kauffman (1741–1807)

Colour, Design, Invention and Composition (Elements of Art)

1778

Royal Academy of Arts, Burlington House, London

Angelica Kauffman (1741–1807), *Colour, Design, Invention and Composition (Elements of Art)*, 1778, Royal Academy of Arts, Burlington House, London

Angelica Kauffman was commissioned in **1778** to paint four works for the Royal Academy's entrance hall at **Burlington House** — **Colour**, **Design**, **Invention**, and **Composition**. These were not decorative choices. They embodied the theoretical framework that **Joshua Reynolds** laid out in his **Discourses on Art**, published in **1788**, defining what he considered the foundational elements of artistic practice. Kauffman's presence here is significant: she was one of only two women among the **Royal Academy's** founding members in **1768**, and her position in this building was hard-won. That the foyer also holds paintings by **Benjamin West**, who served as President after Reynolds, reminds us this was a space of institutional hierarchy and ambition. Kauffman understood that hierarchy and worked within it strategically. Her four allegories are painted in a cool, refined **Neoclassical** style — figures rendered with clarity and controlled gesture, referencing antique sculpture without slavish imitation. Reynolds theorised the grand manner; Kauffman gave it form on these walls. To stand in that foyer is to see the Academy's founding ideals made visible, painted by one of the sharpest

artistic minds of the **eighteenth century**.

Notes



Angelica Kauffman (1741–1807)
Colour
 1778–80
 126 x 148.5 cm
 Royal Academy of Arts, London

Angelica Kauffman (1741–1807), *Colour*, 1778–80, 126 x 148.5 cm, Royal Academy of Arts, London

We begin with **Angelica Kauffman's** **Colour**, painted in **1778–1780** for the ceiling of the **Royal Academy's Council Room** at Somerset House, designed by **Sir William Chambers**. Today the painting hangs outside the café, temporarily replaced by Sarah Pickstone's tribute, **The Rainbow**. Kauffman represents the muse of Painting as a young woman reaching upward to draw colour directly from a rainbow, while holding a palette marked with a single daub of white. A chameleon at her feet signals the diversity of colour found in nature. Both symbols were unconventional: in traditional **iconography**, the rainbow and chameleon belonged to allegories of Air, not Painting. Kauffman consciously redirected them. **Anna Lena Lindberg** argues the figure functions simultaneously as allegory and self-portrait, writing that Kauffman "makes use of a combination, impossible for the male artist, of self-portrait and Muse." The claim is difficult to sustain. The figure is partially unclothed, and Kauffman fiercely protected her public reputation. **Joseph Baretti**, writing in **1781**, described **Colour** as a "blooming young Virgin," suggesting the four paintings trace the stages of an artist's life rather than a single identity. The

figure embodies a beginning — youthful, active, and reaching towards creation.

Notes

This is the first of the paintings. At the moment it has been replaced by tribute by Sarah Pickstone to Angelica Kauffman called *The Rainbow* and this painting is outside the café.

We see the muse *Painting* represented as a young woman artist reaching above her head to collect colour from the rainbow. In her other hand she holds a palette with a single daub of white paint. She represents *Painting* or *Colour*, as one of the elements of art. A chameleon at her feet represents the diverse colours found in nature. Her hair and dress are loose leaving the figure partially unclothed.

In this work and *Design* the figures are physically engaged in the act of creation whereas in *Composition* and *Invention* the figures are engaged in reflection.

Some have suggested this is a self-portrait as well as classical muse but this is unlikely as we know she strongly protected her self-image and the semi-clad figure would have been inappropriate in this context.

Painting is typically described as beautiful with wavy, thick hair holding a palette in one hand and a brush in the other. This description fits Kauffman's painting, but she unusually uses the rainbow and chameleon as symbols of colour; instead they were traditionally used in iconography representing *Air*.

It has been suggested that each of the four paintings represents different stages in the artist's life starting with *Colour* as the "blooming young Virgin".

Notes

Linberg argues that these figures represent self-portraits as well as allegories, which is something Kauffman is known to have done in other works. She writes that Kauffman "makes use of a combination, impossible for the male artist, of self-portrait and Muse" (Linberg, p.27). Although Kauffman did portray strong, working women, as she herself wanted to be viewed, it is unlikely that she was creating explicit self-portraits. The figure in *Colour* is partially unclothed and it is unlikely Kauffman would have represented herself in this way, as she was fiercely protective of her reputation. Furthermore, in his 1781 guide to Somerset House, Baretti describes the four figures as being at different stages of life: *Colour* is a "blooming young Virgin"; *Invention* is

"in the flower of her age"; and Composition is "somewhat more advanced in life than Invention" (Baretti, p.26).

The paintings were commissioned for the Royal Academy's Council Room in the institution's first purpose-built home in Somerset House in a design by Sir William Chambers RA. They were part of a scheme with paintings by Benjamin West in the centre including *The Graces Unveiling Nature* (03/1127) and the four elements: Earth (03/1125), Air (03/1123), Water (03/1124) and Fire (03/1126). While Kauffman represents active female figures, West's are passive. Kauffman was paid £100 for her four paintings and West £125 for his five. 12 portraits by Biagio Rebecca surrounded the scheme, but these are now lost. Design and Composition can be seen on the ceiling of the Council Room in Henry Singleton's painting *The Royal Academicians in General Assembly* from 1795 (03/1310).

When the Royal Academy left Somerset House in 1837 to a shared building with the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square, the ceiling paintings were transferred. While documents in the Royal Academy's archive indicate the paintings were displayed in the Council Room in Trafalgar Square, as they had been at Somerset House (Council minutes XX, 1899, p.431 and GA minutes, 1899, pp.57-58), Hutchison writes that West's paintings were in the Council Room but Kauffman's were in the library (Hutchison, 1986, p.88). A drawing in the National Archives from 1832 of the design for the Council Room at Trafalgar Square shows space allocated for both the West and Kauffman paintings (WORKS 33/939). However, as the drawing dates from before the Royal Academy moved, it is unclear whether this scheme was used.

The ceiling paintings were later transferred to the ceiling of the entrance hall for the Royal Academy at Burlington House in a design by T.G. Jackson. The proposal to hang them there was included in the General Assembly minutes on 20 July 1899, 32 years after the Royal Academy had moved to Burlington House. It was explained "since the removal of the academy to Burlington House [the paintings] had been lying unused in the basement, it became a question whether something might not be done to further improve the somewhat mean aspect of the Hall" (GA minutes, 1899, pp.57-58). " (Royal Academy notes on Colour from their website)

References

Joseph Baretti, *A Guide Through the Royal Academy*, London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1781, p.26.

Sidney Hutchison, *The History of the Royal Academy 1768-1986*, 1986 (2nd ed.), London: Robert Royce.

Wendy Rassyng Roworth, *Angelica Kauffman: A Continental Artist in Georgian England*, London: Reaktion Books, 1992, p.68.

Anna Lena Lindberg, *Touching the rainbow*, pp. 23-31, published online: 23 Apr 2010

<https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/colour>

<https://drrichardstemp.com/2020/05/05/day-48-colour-and-design/>

<https://artsandculture.google.com/story/step-inside-the-royal-academy/eAlyKnbfQeJKlw>



Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807)

Design

1778-80

126 x 148.5 cm

Royal Academy, London

Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807), *Design*, 1778-80, 126 x 148.5 cm, Royal Academy, London

Angelica Kauffman's four ceiling paintings pair the practical with the theoretical: **Design** and **Colour** show figures actively creating, whilst **Composition** and **Invention** show figures in reflection — one gazing skyward for inspiration, the other head in hands, deep in thought. *Design* speaks directly to the Italian concept of **disegno**, meaning drawing as a foundation of all visual art. Tradition described *disegno* as a young man holding a mirror and a compass; Kauffman gave all four figures female form, a deliberate and significant departure. The figure in *Design* works from the **Belvedere Torso**, a celebrated ancient sculpture found in Rome in the 1430s, here shown mirrored, signalling alignment with classical values. The compass, conventional attribute of *disegno*, appears instead in *Composition*, distributing the practical and theoretical across the paired works. These paintings engage directly with the **paragone** debates of Renaissance Italy — arguments about the relative strengths of painting, sculpture, and literature. Within painting itself, the central contest was between *disegno*, associated with the Florentine tradition, and **colore**, associated with the Venetian school

and particularly with **Titian**. Kauffman frames both as equal partners, neither subordinate, which is itself a statement about the nature of artistic practice.

Notes

In this painting, Design is shown using the famous Belvedere Torso (shown mirrored) as a model to indicate the embrace and adherence to classical values and practices.

In Design and Colour the figures are physically engaged in the act of creation whereas in Composition and Invention the figures are engaged in reflection. In Invention the figure looks to the sky for inspiration and in Composition she is deep in thought with her head in her hands. When displayed in the ceiling, the paintings are paired, with one practical and one theoretical at each side of the room.

Design can be seen to represent the Italian term Disegno, a term closer to drawing today. Disegno is described as a young man holding a mirror and a compass. A compass is found in Kauffman's Composition – the other practical element. It is interesting to note that, although tradition may have made some of the figures male, Kauffman created all female figures.

In Renaissance Italy there were several debates about the visual arts called paragone ('comparisons'). One of these was between the relative strengths of painting and sculpture and another between painting and literature. Within painting there was a debate between whether disegno (design or drawing) or colore (or colorito, colour) was the most important aspect of painting. Disegno was associated with Florentine painting and colore with Venetian painting, particularly Titan.

Notes

Her rolled up sleeves are reminiscent of the self-portrait by Artemisia Gentileschi.

The Belvedere torso was found in Rome in the 1430s. On the front of the base is carved "Apollonios, son of Nestor, Athenian". It is now believed to be a 1st century BC copy of an early 2nd century BC original.

References

<https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/design>

<https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/cast-of-belvedere-torso>



Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807)

Invention

1778-80

126 × 148.5 cm

Royal Academy, London

Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807), *Invention*, 1778-80, 126 × 148.5 cm, Royal Academy, London

In *Invention*, the figure gazes skyward, while in *Composition*, she rests her head in her hands, absorbed in thought. Displayed together on the ceiling, the paintings are paired so that one practical and one theoretical muse anchors each side of the room. **Angelica Kauffman** drew on the Italian Renaissance to render strong, vital female bodies. Linberg observes that Kauffman's women "radiate both spiritual and physical vitality," comparing them to **Michelangelo's** athletic sibyls on the **Sistine Chapel** ceiling and to **Artemisia Gentileschi's** history painting. That lineage is deliberate: Kauffman studied in Italy and absorbed these sources directly. Eighteenth-century artists and viewers were fluent in reading iconography, and Kauffman's allegories draw on classical traditions codified in reference works such as **Cesare Ripa's** **Iconologia**, a dictionary of symbolic figures that circulated widely among educated artists of her era. **Invention** follows Ripa's prescription closely: a young woman dressed in white, signifying purity of thought, with two wings at her temples and one arm raised to express the elevation of intellect. Every detail is purposeful. Kauffman was not simply

decorating a ceiling — she was making an argument about the nature of artistic creation, embodied in figures who are themselves unmistakably female.

Notes

In Invention the figure looks to the sky for inspiration and in Composition she is deep in thought with her head in her hands. When displayed in the ceiling, the paintings are paired, with one practical and one theoretical at each side of the room.

Kauffman represented strong female bodies inspired by examples from the Italian Renaissance. Linberg writes that Kauffman's women "radiate both spiritual and physical vitality, in a way that, at least on the face of it, has a resemblance to, for example, Michelangelo's athletic sibyl in the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, which Angelica Kauffman must have seen and studied, or to Artemisia Gentileschi's history painting" (Linberg, p.26).

Artists and viewers of art in the 18th century would have been well versed in reading iconography and Kauffman's works contain many symbols sourced from classical iconographic traditions. She would have seen dictionaries of iconography such as Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia*.

Kauffman's Invention follows the aesthetic tradition described by Ripa as a young woman, dressed in white, as Invention is pure. She has two wings from her head and a raised arm showing the elevation of intellect.

References

<https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/invention>



Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807)

Composition

1778-80

126 × 148.5 cm

Royal Academy, London

Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807), *Composition*, 1778-80, 126 × 148.5 cm, Royal Academy, London

Angelica Kauffman painted four allegorical figures for the **Royal Academy**, and *Composition* is among the most intellectually charged of the group. She leans against the base of a column, her posture signalling deep contemplation rather than action. The chess board mounted on that column is a direct reference to strategic and intellectual thinking — composition in art demands exactly that kind of deliberate, calculated intelligence. In her right hand she holds a **compass**, the instrument of geometric precision, affirming that compositional planning is a discipline as rigorous as any science. To her left, pencil and paper stand ready: the practical tools through which ideas become structure. Kauffman positions the figure on a threshold between open nature and built architecture, a visual argument that composition mediates between instinct and order. Kauffman received **£100** for all four paintings, a single fee covering the complete cycle. They were installed originally in the **Council Room at Somerset House**, the Academy's home before its move to **Burlington House**. That institutional setting gave the paintings a didactic function: these were not decorative works but a

programme defining what the Academy believed the foundations of artistic practice to be.

Notes

Composition looks deep in thought and leans on the base of a column. On the column is a chess board symbolising intellectual and strategic thinking. The compass in her right hand refers to the precision needed for accurate composition and she sits on the border between nature and architecture. On the left are pencil and paper used to plan a composition.

Kauffman was paid £100 for all four paintings which were originally in the Council Room at Somerset House.

References

<https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/composition>



Angelica Kauffmann (1741-1807)
Poor Maria
1781
Oil on copper
31.8 x 26.7 cm

Angelica Kauffmann (1741-1807), *Poor Maria*, 1781, 31.8 x 26.7 cm

Angelica Kauffman's painting of **Maria** became a commercial phenomenon of remarkable scale. As J. Moser recorded in his memoir of the artist, the image was transferred to an incalculable variety of manufactured objects, from watch-cases to tea trays, across the workshops of London and Birmingham. **William Wynne Ryland** produced a print of the composition in **1779**, amplifying its reach further still. The subject derives from **Laurence Sterne**, appearing first in **Tristram Shandy** of **1759** and then in **A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy**, published in **1768**. Maria is the heartbroken figure Yorick encounters, and her story carried a pointed moral weight: witnessing her grief, Yorick grows conscious of the danger of surrendering so completely to feeling that reason itself is lost. This tension between sense and sensibility was not merely literary territory — medical writers of the period debated the peril of excessive emotional indulgence at length. Kauffman's image entered a broader cultural conversation also explored by **George Romney** and **Joseph Wright of Derby**, both artists associated with **melancholic** temperament. The composition echoes **Dürer's** **Melencolia I** in pose and atmosphere. A variant exists in a private English

collection, and the work sold at Christie's in **2007** for seventy-eight thousand pounds.

Notes

This became a multi-media sensation at the time as "In the elegant manufactories of London and Birmingham it was transferred to an incalculable variety of articles of all sorts and sizes from a Watch-case to a tea-waiter' (J. Moser, *Memoir of the Late Angelica Kauffman*).

The image also became a print produced by Ryland in 1779.

It is one of the few times she painted a scene based on English literature. It depicts the heart-broken Maria originally from Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1759) and then her story was taken up again in *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*, first published in 1768.

There is a variant of the picture in a private collection in England.

The work sold in 2007 at Christies for £78,000 with an estimate of £20,000-£30,000.

Sense and Sensibility

The image echoes Dürer's *Melancholia* but there is another aspect that was important at the time. The hero Yorick while looking at her becomes conscious of the danger of sinking so far into feeling as to lose one's reason. This kind of excess would become associated with sensibility as the age of sense versus sensibility developed. The peril was widely discussed in medical texts of the period. The subject of Maria was associated with artists inclined to depression such as Romney and Wright of Derby and to a lesser extent Kauffman.

References

W. Wassyng-Roworth, ed., *Angelica Kauffman: A Continental Artist in Georgian England*, London, 1992, p.158.



Francis Eginton (—)
Graces awakening Cupid
 c.1778
 Aquatint on paper
 28.5 cm diameter
 Science Museum, —

Francis Eginton (—), *Graces awakening Cupid*, c.1778, 28.5 cm diameter, Science Museum, —

Angelica Kauffman stood apart from her contemporaries as the most reproduced artist of her era, and the technology that spread her images was itself a Georgian innovation. **Mechanical painting**, invented in the **1770s** by **Matthew Boulton** and **Francis Eginton**, began with a copper aquatint plate — aquatint being a tonal etching process introduced to Britain in **1772** — printed onto paper. That print transferred to canvas, creating a tonal foundation which painters first roughed in and professionals finished in oil, producing affordable copies indistinguishable at a glance from originals. More mechanical paintings were made of Kauffman's work than any other artist's, though few survive in good condition. The painting reproduced here depicts **Calypso** attempting to persuade **Ulysses** to remain on her island. Having detained him for seven years during his return from Troy, she pleads with evident sincerity after Zeus, responding to Athena's appeal, orders his release. Kauffman places genuine feeling on Calypso's side rather than reducing her to an obstacle. Wendy Wassing-Roworth has proposed that this was among Kauffman's final English works, and that Ulysses — newly freed

and homeward bound — reflects Kauffman's own imminent departure from Britain after years of celebrated but ultimately constrained success.

Notes

As I have said, Kauffman was the most popular source of reproduced pictures. There is an interesting technique that was used to produce a copy of a painting that looked like a painting, called mechanical painting.

Mechanical painting was invented in the 1770s by Matthew Bolton and Francis Eginton. An copper aquatint plate was used to print onto paper. The paper print was then transferred onto canvas. This formed a tonal impression that was then coloured by hand using oil paint in an early form of painting-by-numbers. Aquatint is a type of etching that was introduced in Britain in 1772 and produces areas of tone rather than lines. The painting was first done by 'boys' and then finished by professional artists. The aim was to produce copies of an oil painting that looked identical but could be produced and sold cheaply in large volumes. More mechanical paintings were produced of Kauffman's work than any other artist but few examples survive.

(CLICK) A 10 × 8 inch copy of this painting sold for two guineas and a 50 × 40 inch version twelve guineas. Unfortunately, very few survive and they are in poor condition.

The nymph Calypso detained Ulysses (Greek: Odysseus) for seven years as he was returning from the Trojan war. Athena appealed to Zeus on Ulysses behalf and Zeus eventually ordered Calypso to release him which she reluctantly did. In the painting she is trying to reverse the decision by pleading for him to stay because of her sincere affection for him. In some versions of the story she kills herself after he leaves. Ulysses eventually returns home to his wife Penelope and is recognised by his dog Argos.

Notes

It has been suggested that this is one of the last paintings she produced before leaving England and Ulysses represents Kauffman who has just been released from a spell and is now able to return home.

References

https://etheses.bham.ac.uk//id/eprint/1545/1/Fogarty_11_MPhil1.pdf
(Master's thesis on mechanical painting)

W. Wassing-Roworth, ed., *Angelica Kauffman: A Continental Artist in Georgian England*, London, 1992, pp. 160-161



Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807)
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
1787
64 × 52 cm
Goethe National Museum, Weimar

Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807), Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 1787, 64 × 52 cm, Goethe National Museum, Weimar

Angelica Kauffman left London in **1781**, newly free to remarry after the death of her fraudulent first husband, de Horn. She wed **Antonio Zucchi**, a senior artist and friend of her father, on notably equal financial terms — a formal marriage contract ensured her considerable assets remained entirely under her own control. The couple travelled through Flanders, Innsbruck, Verona, and Padua before settling in Rome, where Kauffman painted **Leonardo da Vinci Dying in the Arms of Francis I** in **1782** and secured commissions from leading noble families. Zucchi published a catalogue of her work, the *Memorandum of Painting* — an early **catalogue raisonné** that she continued to maintain after his death. On the Continent she found the recognition that England, with its preference for portraiture and landscape, had denied her as a **history painter**. **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe**, who became a close friend, stated directly that she worked harder and accomplished more than any artist he knew. She purchased a villa near the papal summer residence outside Rome, which Goethe visited. When she died in **1807**, the entire **Accademia di San Luca** — founded in Rome in 1577 — followed her coffin, carrying two of

her finest pictures, exactly as they had done for **Raphael**.

Notes

In 1781 she left London after 15 years.

At this point her former husband, the scoundrel de Horn had died so she felt free to marry. She marries a much older artist who was a friend of her father, Antonio Zucchi. She is a lot wealthier than him so they signed a marriage contract (what we now call a prenup) making it clear that her assets are under her control and not his. They left London for Flanders, then Innsbruck, Verona and Padua.

In October she was introduced to Tsar Paul I of Russia and his wife and Kauffman paints Leonardo da Vinci Dying in the Arms of Francis I, 1782 and other works for leading noble families.

Her husband published a catalogue of her work, Memorandum of Painting, which she continued to maintain after his death. An early form of Catalogue Raisonné.

She was a history painter and disappointed by the English preference for portraits and landscapes and she eventually returned to the Continent.

On the Continent she became a friend of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (the famous German poet, playwright, novelist, scientist, statesman, theatre director, and critic) who said she worked harder and accomplished more than any artist he knew.

She buys a villa near the papal summer residence outside Rome and is visited by her friends including Goethe.

Her reputation continued to grow and at her death the entire Academy of St. Luke (founded 1577, Rome) followed her coffin carrying two of her best pictures as they had done for Raphael.

Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807)

Judgment of Paris

c. 1781

80 x 100.9 cm

Museo de Arte de Ponce, Ponce,
Puerto Rico



Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807), *Judgment of Paris*, c. 1781, 80 x 100.9 cm, Museo de Arte de Ponce, Ponce, Puerto Rico

The **Judgement of Paris** sits at the origin point of an entire civilisation's mythology. **Eris**, goddess of discord, was excluded from a divine banquet and retaliated by tossing a golden apple inscribed *for the fairest* into the gathering. **Hera**, **Athena**, and **Aphrodite** each claimed it, and **Zeus**, unwilling to adjudicate among his own family, assigned the task to **Paris**, a Trojan mortal whose recent impartiality in a cattle competition had earned him a reputation for honest judgement. Each goddess offered a bribe: Hera promised dominion over Europe and Asia, Athena offered supreme military skill and wisdom, and Aphrodite offered the love of **Helen**, the most beautiful woman alive and wife of the Spartan king **Menelaus**. Paris chose Aphrodite. His abduction of Helen triggered the **Trojan War**, a decade-long conflict ending only through the stratagem of the **Trojan Horse**. Troy fell, but one survivor, **Aeneas**, carried his household gods westward. After a devastating entanglement with **Dido** of Carthage, whom he abandoned, Aeneas reached Italy and set in motion the founding lineage of Rome — meaning a single divine beauty contest reverberated across the entire ancient world.

Notes

Judgement of Paris

Eris, who was not invited to a party of the gods, got annoyed and threw a golden apple into the party inscribed 'for the fairest one'. An argument ensued and to avoid getting into the argument Zeus decided Paris, a Trojan mortal, should judge because he had just judged against his own prize bull in a competition against the gods. The golden apple was awarded by Paris to resolve a dispute between Hera, Athena and Aphrodite about which was the most fair, Hera (Roman Juno, wife of Zeus and goddess of women and marriage) tried to bribe Paris by making him king of Europe and Asia, Athena (Roman Minerva was the goddess of wisdom, law, arts, warfare, etc.) offered wisdom and skill in war and Aphrodite (Roman Venus, goddess of love) offered the love of the world's most beautiful women Helen of Troy, wife of Greek king Menelaus. Paris chose Aphrodite and his love of Helen led to the Trojan Wars. Troy was defeated by the ruse of the Trojan Horse and Aeneas, a Trojan survivor, after falling in love with Dido of Carthage and then deserting her, founded Rome.



Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807)

Ulysses on the Island of Circe

1793

Barrett Collection, University of Texas at Dallas

Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807), *Ulysses on the Island of Circe*, 1793, Barrett Collection, University of Texas at Dallas

In Homer's *Odyssey*, **Circe** is a sorceress who transforms Odysseus's sailors into pigs, seduces their captain for a year, and releases them only when his crew force him back to his senses. **Angelica Kauffman**, painting **Ulysses on the Island of Circe** in **1793**, rejects that reading entirely. Her Circe is no predatory enchantress but a tender companion, and Ulysses appears not trapped but genuinely transfixed — a man falling into love rather than a hero ensnared by witchcraft. This reinterpretation is characteristic of Kauffman's broader practice. Throughout her career she consistently foregrounded the virtues and achievements of women, treating figures such as Penelope and Cleopatra with sympathy and psychological depth. As the *Apollo Magazine* critic writing on this painting observes, Kauffman's personal ambition went hand in hand with a sense of **female solidarity**. The art historian **Frances Gage** has situated Kauffman within a tradition of women reshaping **history painting** from a female vantage point — and this painting is among the clearest examples of that impulse at work. It brings to mind Anne Elliot's remark in **Jane Austen's** **Persuasion**: women have been characterised

negatively in literature because men have had every advantage in telling their own story. Kauffman redresses that balance.

Notes

Ulysses (Greek: Odysseus) lands on an island and some of his sailors discover a palace where they are magically turned into pigs. One man escapes and warns Ulysses who is given a magic herb prevents him being turned into a pig. Instead the sorceress Circe falls in love with Ulysses and they make love for a year. Finally his crew shake him out of his trance and they all flee the island.

Kauffman has turned Circe into a loving companion and Ulysses looks as if he has just fallen under her spell. Kauffman reinterpreted historical scenes and mythological tales from a female perspective and often finds a new and interesting angle from which to view the narrative. This echoes the words of Anne Elliot in Jane Austen's *Persuasion*, who points out that if women have generally been characterised negatively in literature, it is because "Men have had every advantage of us in telling their own story,". Kauffman turns the tables on this.

Notes

"In *The Odyssey*, Odysseus and his crew land on Aeaea, and a team of scouts discover the palace of Circe, a witch goddess. Circe invites Odysseus's men inside for a drink and then magically turns them into pigs. One man escapes to tell Odysseus about their comrades' fate and Circe's trickery. Odysseus bravely hopes to rescue his men from Circe's enchantment; on the way to her house, Odysseus receives help from Hermes, who offers him a plan and equips him with moly, a magical herb that will protect him from Circe's witchcraft. The plan works: the moly counters Circe's magic, she swoons for Odysseus and transforms his crew from pigs back into men. Odysseus and Circe then make love. For a year. Finally, some of Odysseus's crew shake him from the madness of his long Circean interlude and compel him to resume the journey home to Ithaca." [1]

"What struck me most, however, was the way in which Kauffman's personal ambition goes hand in hand with a sense of female solidarity. She consistently foregrounds the achievements and the virtues of her own sex, as with Penelope weaving and Cleopatra grieving. In *Ulysses on the Island of Circe* (1793), she goes so far as to transform Homer's seductive sorceress into a

helpful hostess. Kauffman's reinvention of history painting from a female perspective brings to mind Anne Elliot in Jane Austen's *Persuasion*, who points out that if women have generally been characterised negatively in literature, it is because men have had the advantage of telling their own story. Kauffman redresses the balance." [2]

References

<https://www.ulyssesguide.com/15-circe>

<https://www.apollo-magazine.com/angelica-kauffman-history-painting/>



Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807)
**Portrait of Sarah Harrop (Mrs. Bates)
as a Muse**
1780–81
142 x 121 cm
Princeton University Art Museum,
New Jersey

Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807), Portrait of Sarah Harrop (Mrs. Bates) as a Muse, 1780–81, 142 x 121 cm, Princeton University Art Museum, New Jersey

Angelica Kauffmann's portrait of the singer **Sarah Harrop**, painted around **1780**, is a rare image of a self-made woman by one of the very few professional women artists of the era. Kauffmann was one of two female co-founders of Britain's **Royal Academy**, and her sitter had built a substantial personal fortune through her reputation as a leading Handelian performer. The painting shows Harrop seated in a wilderness landscape, a lyre at her side and a rolled sheet of music in hand. The mountain is **Mount Parnassos**, home of the Muses, and the waterfall flows from the Hippocrene spring; the lyre identifies Harrop with **Erato**, Muse of lyric poetry. Yet the sheet music anchors the image firmly in the eighteenth century, for it is recognisably an aria from **Handel's** opera **Rodelinda**, first performed in **1725**. That aria, "Dove sei, l'amato bene," is sung by Rodelinda's husband, whose words of longing were chosen for their personal significance in what was almost certainly a marriage portrait. Kauffmann herself married the artist **Antonio Zucchi** at roughly the same moment, a coincidence that gives the painting's quiet emotional register an additional, unmistakable depth.

Notes

"Angelica Kauffmann's portrait of the renowned singer Sarah Harrop (Mrs. Bates), arguably the artist's masterpiece in portraiture, is a rare representation of a self-made woman, the great Handelian performer Sarah Harrop (1755–1811), by one of the very few professional women artists of the period.

Kauffmann, one of two female cofounders of Britain's Royal Academy, shows Harrop seated in the wilderness, a lyre at her side and a rolled sheet of music in her hand. The mountain, Mount Parnassos, is the home of the Muses, and the waterfall issues from the Hippocrene spring. The lyre most likely identifies Erato, the Muse of lyric poetry, and while the instrument is based on ancient types, the sheet music grounds the portrait in the eighteenth century, for it is recognizably an aria from George Frideric Handel's opera *Rodelinda*, Queen of the Lombards (1725).

The picture, first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1781, dates from around the time of Harrop's marriage in 1780, a marriage to which she brought a substantial personal fortune made through her talents as a performer. The music hints at a personal meaning. The aria "Dove sei, l'amato bene" is sung not by Rodelinda but by her husband, whose longing words must have been chosen specifically for their personal significance in what was almost certainly a marriage portrait. That Kauffmann the artist was also married at about this time, to a fellow artist of more pedestrian talents, Antonio Zucchi, only deepens its resonance." [1]

References

1. <https://artmuseum.princeton.edu/collections/objects/59651> [accessed 21/11/2021]



Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807)
*Sketch for Queen Maria Carolina of
 Naples and Sicily and King Ferdinand
 I with their children*

1783

72 × 100 cm

Liechtenstein Museum, Vienna

Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807), *Sketch for Queen Maria Carolina of Naples and Sicily and King Ferdinand I with their children*, 1783, 72 × 100 cm, Liechtenstein Museum, Vienna

Following the personal losses of 1782, **Kauffman** relocated with her husband to a prestigious Roman palazzo once occupied by **Anton Raphael Mengs**, establishing one of the city's most sought-after studios and receiving honorary membership of the **Venice Academy**. The following year brought a significant royal encounter. **Maria Carolina, Queen of the Two Sicilies**, already an avid collector of Kauffman's prints, pressured her to accept the position of court painter. Kauffman declined, and her own words make her reasoning clear: "My circumstances permit me to preserve my freedom." She did, however, agree to visit Naples in the summer of **1784**, producing a group portrait of **Ferdinand IV**, Maria Carolina, and six of their children. The result is deliberately, even brazenly, flattering. Ferdinand, by contemporary accounts short and scrawny with an outsized nose, appears tall and elegant. His dumpy queen radiates effortless grace. The three dogs are the only figures painted with any fidelity to reality. Kauffman understood exactly what successful portraiture required of her. Crucially, the composition also reflects a broader

shift in **Rousseau**-inflected taste: patrons now wished to be shown beneath open sky rather than framed by palace interiors.

Notes

In 1782 her father died and her paternal aunt. She is made an honorary member of the Venice Academy and moves with her husband to a grand palazzo in the centre of Rome formerly occupied by Mengs and opens one of the city's most prestigious studios.

In 1783 in Naples, she was pounced upon by Maria Carolina, Queen of the Two Sicilies, a fearsome woman who already owned a large collection of Kauffman's prints and tried vainly to persuade her to accept the position of court painter.

In the summer of 1784 she visited the Queen of Naples and painted The Royal Family of Ferdinand IV and Maria Carolina of Naples and their Children. The group portrait Kauffman painted of the Queen, her husband, Ferdinand IV, and six of their seventeen children (no fewer than eight died in their infancy of smallpox) is ludicrously flattering, and tells viewers all they need to know about being a successful portraitist.

The King, who in reality was short and scrawny, with a huge bulbous nose, pig's eyes and a 'forest of coffee-coloured hair, which he never powders', is portrayed by Kauffman as tall and ineffably elegant, while his dumpy wife is the epitome of relaxed grace. The three dogs in the picture are probably the only figures to be faithfully represented. But the price she was paid for this travesty was gratifyingly large.

The bucolic ideal of a rural life and the ideas of the French philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau both inform this composition, which reflects the corresponding shift of taste among patrons. These no longer desired to have themselves recorded for posterity in the context of their palaces and other imposing residences. They wished to be shown, rather, under God's open sky.

The Queen tried to entice Kauffman to stay as her court painter but Kauffman wrote, "I was received very graciously by the court, particularly by Her Majesty the Queen. I was offered pensions and every imaginable token of regard to persuade me to stay. But, thank the Lord, my circumstances permit me to preserve my freedom."

Notes

Ferdinand I (1751–1825), was the King of the Two Sicilies from 1816, after his restoration following victory in the Napoleonic Wars. Before that he had been, since 1759, Ferdinand IV of the Kingdom of Naples and Ferdinand III of the Kingdom of Sicily. He was also King of Gozo. He was deposed twice from the throne of Naples: once by the revolutionary Parthenopean Republic for six months in 1799 and again by Napoleon in 1805, before being restored in 1816.



Angelica Kauffman (1741–1807)
Self-Portrait with Bust of Minerva
ca. 1784
93 × 76.5 cm
Bündner Kunstmuseum, Chur

Angelica Kauffman (1741–1807), *Self-Portrait with Bust of Minerva*, ca. 1784, 93 × 76.5 cm, Bündner Kunstmuseum, Chur

By the time **Angelica Kauffman** painted this self-portrait in **1781**, she was forty-three years old and one of the most celebrated artists in Europe. The image radiates earned confidence: she holds the tools of her profession whilst a bust of **Minerva** stands beside her, the Roman goddess of wisdom, justice, and the arts, equated with the Greek **Athena** from the second century BC onward. Minerva sponsors defensive war only, never conquest, and that distinction matters here. Kauffman aligns herself with disciplined intellect rather than aggressive ambition, framing artistic labour as a principled vocation. **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe**, writing shortly after this portrait was completed, caught the tension beneath that composed surface. He noted that Kauffman was tired of commissions, that her husband welcomed the steady income, and that she herself longed for the freedom to paint on her own terms, to study and take pains. The image and the testimony together reveal an artist navigating the gap between public success and personal ambition. The painting now hangs in **Chur**, the Swiss town where Kauffman was born, a fitting home for a work that so directly confronts the question of

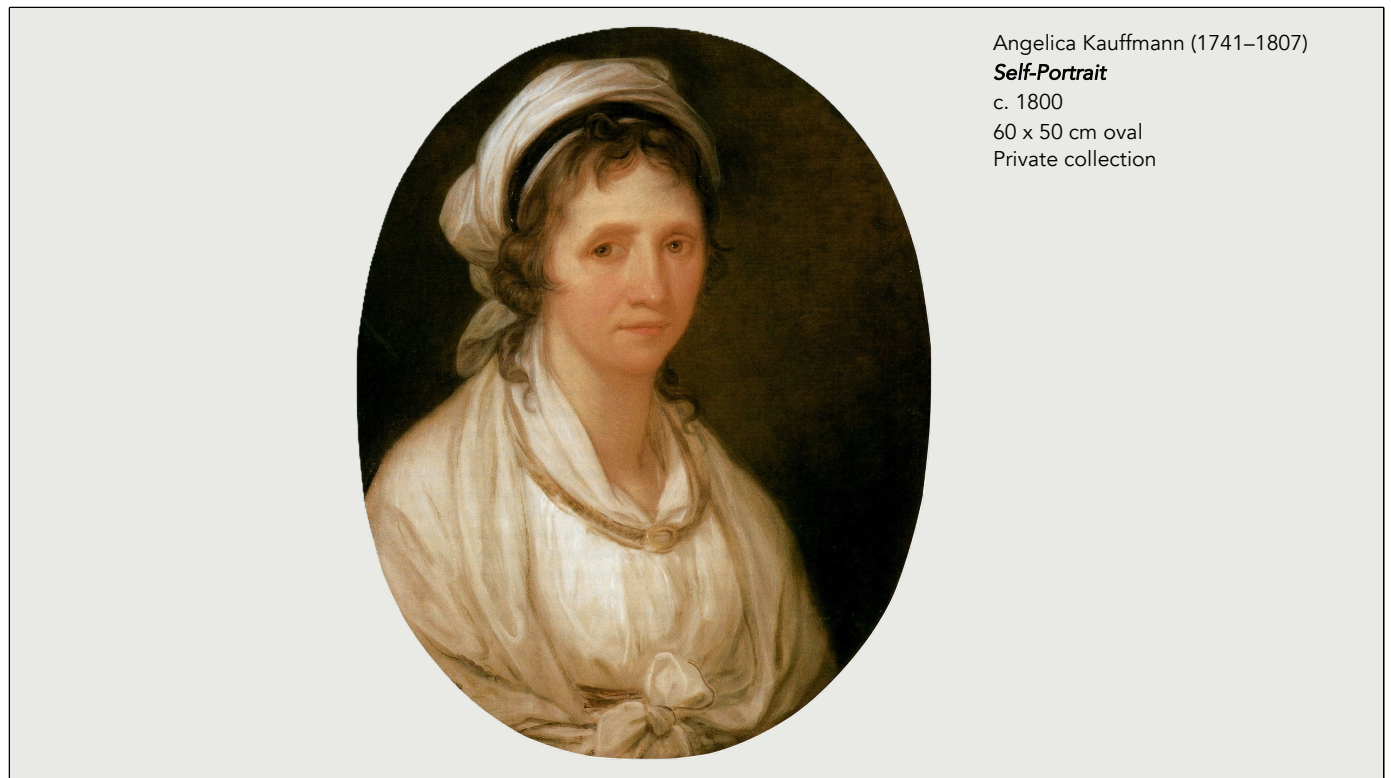
what it cost a woman to build a career of that scale.

Notes

Kauffman painted many self-portraits and this was painted when she was 43. She is wealthy and self-assured, one of the leading personalities of Europe. She shows herself holding the tools of her trade but balanced by a bust of Minerva, the the Roman goddess of wisdom and strategic warfare, justice, law, victory, and the sponsor of arts, trade, and strategy. Minerva is not a patron of violence such as Mars, but of defensive war only. From the second century BC onward, the Romans equated her with the Greek goddess Athena. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe wrote about her a couple of years after she had painted this self-portrait:

"She is tired of commissions, but her old husband thinks it wonderful that so much money should roll in for what is often easy work- She would like to paint to please herself and have more leisure to study and take pains."

This painting now hangs in Chur, the town of her birth.



Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807)
Self-Portrait
c. 1800
60 x 50 cm oval
Private collection

Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807), Self-Portrait, c. 1800, 60 x 50 cm oval, Private collection

Angelica Kauffman left a profound mark on both art and society, though her reputation suffered an uneven afterlife. Her friend **Goethe** admired her work yet believed that cheap reproductions and relentless commercialisation diluted its impact. Victorian audiences largely ignored her, and the arrival of modernism made her mythological scenes appear remote and outmoded. Her portraits, however, deserve serious reassessment — the finest stand equal to those of **George Romney** and **Joshua Reynolds**. Scholarly interest has grown considerably over the past two decades. **Angela Rosenthal's** monograph of 2006 proved a turning point, and **Bettina Baumgärtel** is currently preparing a catalogue raisonné that will give Kauffman's output a rigorous scholarly foundation for the first time. A major exhibition planned for the **Royal Academy** was cancelled, meaning British audiences have had no dedicated showing of her work since Brighton Museum and Art Gallery mounted one in **1992**. Much of Kauffman's surviving work remains in country houses rather than public galleries. **Saltram House** in Devon, a National Trust property, holds eleven of her pictures — a concentration that reflects how

deeply her decorative and portrait commissions were woven into the fabric of Georgian aristocratic life.

Notes

Angelica Kauffman made an enormous impression on art and society. Her friend Goethe was a supporter but felt her ability was diminished by the many cheap reproductions and her over commercialisation.

The Victorians paid no attention to her work and then the advent of modern art made her mythological scenes appear dated and uninteresting. Her portraits however, are in need of a reappraisal as the finest are the equal of the George Romney and even Joshua Reynolds.

Scholarly interest in Kauffman has grown over the last twenty years helped by a monograph by Angela Rosenthal in 2006 and 2006, and catalogue raisonné that is being prepared by Bettina Baumgärtel.

An exhibition of her work was due to open at the Royal Academy in 2021 but it was cancelled. It would have been the first such exhibition in the UK since 1992 when she had an exhibition in the Brighton Museum and Art Gallery. The majority of Kauffman's works are located in country houses, such as Saltram in Devon, a National Trust property that holds 11 of her pictures.

20-02 ANGELICA KAUFMANN



Angelica Kauffmann
(1741–1807)
Self-Portrait
c. 1800

DR. LAURENCE SHAFE

WWW.SHAFE.UK



Angelica Kauffman was not simply a successful woman in a man's profession — she reshaped that profession from within. We have traced her journey from Chur to Rome, London, and back to Rome, examining how she navigated institutional exclusion, mastered history painting against every structural barrier, and built a commercial empire on engraving and design. Her career remains a precise measure of what extraordinary ambition, intelligence, and determination could achieve in Georgian Europe.



A Free Course on the History of Western Art

Dr Laurence Shafe www.shafe.uk

